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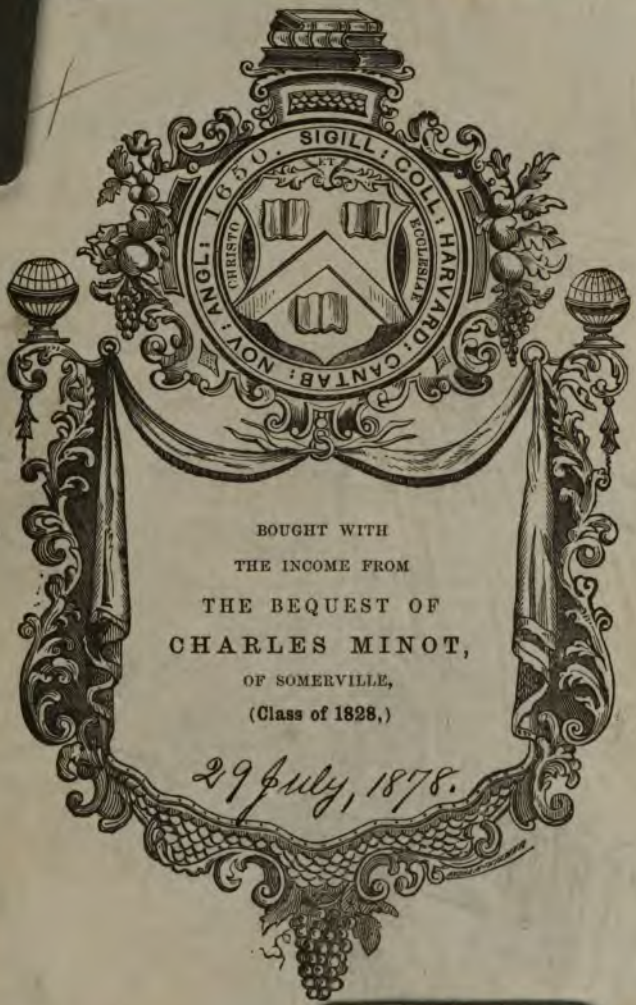

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PRESENT-DAY PAPERS ON PROMINENT QUESTIONS IN THEOLOGY

Anal.

PRESENT-DAY PAPERS

On Prominent Questions in Theology

EDITED BY

THE RIGHT REV. ALEXANDER EWING, D.C.L.
BISHOP OF ARGYLL AND THE ISLES

THIRD SERIES

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PREFACE TO VOL. III.

THIS is the last volume of the "Present-Day Papers," so far as it completes the series at this time. Other Papers are in preparation, and will be given to the public, should it be deemed desirable: one on the relations of God to evil; one on the doctrine of election, or selection as it is now called, viewed both in its physical and spiritual aspects; one (or more) on the nature and office of the Church; one on the mischiefs of a false Catholicism; and another on that of a false Protestantism; with some others. But at present the series must close through the inability of the Editor, from bad health, to attend to it. It has, it is hoped, helped to indicate a path by which it will be found, as it is followed on, that, rightly understood, Christ is not behind or in contradiction to the true scientific and moral progress of our age, but is its explanation and completion; and that the Series has also helped to discredit that false conception of *method*, which would make it the object itself, instead of the means whereby the object is attained.

The Editor takes this opportunity of thanking, with his full heart, those earnest and excellent men who have helped him in his labours, without whose help his labours would

have been but little worth, and to whom also he has expressed his feelings of obligation in the Dedication to the first volume. He begs also to say that he owes the exquisite Latin of that, and of the other Dedications to his Beloved Brother the Bishop of St. Andrews, Dr. Charles Wordsworth. And he also owes much to his friend the Vicar of St. John's, Limehouse, Henry Whitehead, M.A., for his kind correction of much of the letter-press.

He also takes this opportunity of thanking Messrs. Strahan and Co. for the painstaking care they have bestowed upon the work, and for the elegant form in which the "Papers" have been put forth. May they be some contribution towards the knowledge of God, and some help to those also (for the Editor's *own* "Papers" are merely elementary) who are but little advanced in the heavenly kingdom.

A. E., Bp.

PALERMO, SICILY,
March 25th, 1871.

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PRESENT-DAY PAPERS ON PROMINENT QUESTIONS IN THEOLOGY

SOME LETTERS OF THOMAS ERSKINE OF LINLATHEN.

SOME LETTERS OF THOMAS ERSKINE OF LINLATHEN.

THE propriety of publishing any writing without the sanction of its author must ever remain a question difficult of decision, which can only be rightly determined by taking it to the region of the light of love. The character of the subject, and the object the writer had in view, will, of course, affect the decision.

The following letters of the late Mr. Erskine were not written with any view to publication, and it is possible that they may contain something which the author would have wished to enlarge or alter; but the Editor is satisfied that there is on the whole nothing in them alien to his general sentiments and conclusions. Moved therefore by that loving reverence for Mr. Erskine which was shared by all intimate with him (so that it is not too much to say that most of these could use the words of the late Mr. Alexander Scott when he said that he "could not think of God without thinking of Mr. Erskine"), the Editor felt he could do no wrong to his memory, but would rather bring an offering to its honour, were he to give these letters to the world.*

The Editor believes that Mr. Erskine himself would have

* In letter p. 44, Second Series, which bears reference to the periodical now published, this permission seems to have been contemplated and given by Mr. Erskine himself.

consented to their publication. But, apart from this, looking to that high spiritual region wherein he lived when he was here (and which he now doubtless enjoys in an increased degree), all merely human and personal considerations are swallowed up in the general and the divine. These letters are full of that light which the world always needs, and cannot everywhere obtain. It is a light which the world is now obtaining more fully than in time past, yet it by no means has enough, and cannot but be richer by the addition of that light which was in Mr. Erskine, in him exceptionally full and by him long possessed; for he enjoyed fully throughout the greater part of a long life that which has been enjoyed by most of us in but lesser degree and for a shorter time. Few of us start with his great natural capacities, or see so soon what is but apparent to others later in the day, so that one says well of him who writes, in a notice published of him after his death (*Contemporary Review*, May, 1870), "How high must that peak have been which caught the light so early!" The light which he had was indeed very remarkable, and can scarcely be transferred, having been mainly personal, found to a greater degree in his presence than in his books. His letters even but partially convey it; although they do so, we think, more than his books, which is a further justification, if any be required, for their being published. At all times the unconventional and direct mode of address, which is the peculiarity of letter-writing, gives an advantage for the conveyance of spiritual instruction; and this direct and unconventional character is a special feature in the letters of Mr. Erskine. Their utility was largely experienced whilst he was alive; wherever they reached, they were found to be

of great spiritual assistance. It would seem somewhat of an injustice to the world, and to his memory, that communications so valuable should be restricted to the few individuals who received them, and that, if free from all that is of mere private interest, or which would compromise any one, they should not be given to the public. There is often, we think, a false and, it may be, a selfish reticence exercised on this subject; and we believe that great losses have frequently befallen the world by the withholding of writings of general utility because of their having been originally addressed but to one person, from a non-recognition of the fact that what is of common interest should be common to all. Of course discrimination must be exercised, and private affairs or such general questions as have a personal application must be omitted. But in matters free from this, the knowledge of which is beneficial to all, such knowledge should surely be communicated. General questions alone, as a rule, have a useful interest for the public. Accordingly, although no man had less in his correspondence of that which was merely personal to himself or to his correspondents, which therefore could be called private, still, in deference to the rule of delicacy, some omissions have been made in these letters. Since, however, great part of the beauty and riches of his mind lay in the tenderness and force of his appeals, these omissions are no doubt injurious to the letters; but in no case has any alteration been made in the sense. It was a question whether expressions of personal affection should be retained, but it was decided that, in a general way, they ought to be retained, giving, as they do, much of that spirit which was characteristic of Mr. Erskine—his spirit of righteous love. It was that spirit of

eternal love and righteousness in which he lived which gave to his intellect much of its force and power; a power the full extent of which those will most appreciate who are best acquainted with the spiritual regions wherein he dwelt. Perhaps the retention of some of these expressions may have been owing to the pleasurable thought that they had been addressed to the Editor himself. Yet it humbles him to remember such expressions from one who was so devoted and holy a follower of his Lord; for that such he was, none can doubt who really knew him and were of sufficient spiritual discernment to judge that which they saw. We well remember a clergyman so qualified, who had come from afar to consult him on some spiritual topic, hurrying from his room, exclaiming to those outside, "Do not speak to me; I wish to remember what he said. I have read of saints; but before I never saw one." Yet let us not overdraw Thomas Erskine, lest we give a false impression, and do injury to that by which he himself would have liked to be known, his aspect as it was in the sight of God. In our sight he seemed akin to the divine, yet was he truly human in the best sense. It was in the fulness and force of his humanity that great part of his power and charm lay. From the fulness of his humanity it was that he derived those powers of discernment and sympathy which gave point to his spiritual instruction. He was full of human wit and humour, which was only second in him to that higher spirit which raised him upward to the divine. No household or company was better ordered or more select than his, not in the worldly sense merely, but in that discrimination which selects whatever is notable and worthy. He had a considerable and delicate taste in art, fostered by

lengthened residences on the Continent; and he was a lover of music, or rather of melody. As "Laird of Linlathen" (that is, as a landlord), as a politician, and as a neighbour, he was in the foremost rank of wisdom, intelligence, and kindness; to the poor he was simply a brother and equal; superior indeed in information and in refinement, but in everything else as one of themselves, neither more nor less; an equality real, and felt to be such by themselves—the genuine outcoming of affection and insight. But we are not here to praise Mr. Erskine, or to write his life. Could we do the latter worthily we might attempt it; but it should be done by some one who had a more complete knowledge of him. The writer's knowledge of Mr. Erskine extended over too short a period to enable him to do justice to his life at large. He knew him intimately but for the last decade of his pilgrimage; his first and, in some sense, better days, were passed at a time beyond the writer's knowledge. Those days no doubt embrace the more stirring periods of his life; those, that is, wherein he was best known and busy in the world. This first and earlier period of Mr. Erskine's life was passed in Scotland in the exciting times of the outburst of those doctrines associated there with the name of the parish of "Row," where his friend, the venerated Dr. Campbell, was privileged to become a Confessor and Martyr—doctrines which are now all but universally accepted, having, as they have, for their basis the reasonable premisses that the acts of Providence are in conformity with the Moral Laws of God. To this Confession Mr. Erskine gave an early testimony, both formally in the legal defence of his friend—for he was then an advocate or barrister, his elder brother being still alive—and afterwards

informally by his pen. It is very desirable that some fuller history of that period should be given than any which has yet appeared, which should embrace both a narrative of the time and its actors, and fully set forth the principles which were at stake. The memoir of Mr. Story of Roseneath, excellent and interesting as it is, is but an outline, and does not—indeed does not profess to—illustrate the principles which were at stake, and does not embrace the history of Mr. Erskine. Something fuller and more minute is still required, which should also bear record of Mr. Erskine, and contain the bent and outcome of his teaching, when the postulates and experiences of his youth had orbed themselves into the mature conclusions of his later years. With this view, some memoranda of these final years have been gathered together, and some anecdotes and conversations noted down, which give a fuller meaning to Mr. Erskine's writings, and a greater charm to his printed works.

The letters *now* given are, we trust, but to pave the way to something better—some fuller memorial; but even these, we think, do much to recall the teaching and personality of Mr. Erskine, and convey also some of that pure and hallowed light in which he lived, and which he derived from a continuous and loving belief in, and dependence upon, a Living and Personal God.

His various published writings, the "Essay on Faith," the "Internal Evidence of Revealed Religion," the "Freedom of the Gospel," the "Brazen Serpent," and the "Doctrine of Election" (especially this last), are valuable works, both as original and important contributions to theology, and as accurately conveying the progress of his mind at different stages.

Of his person there are some paintings and photographs which sufficiently recall his outward appearance. But how little do either or any of these set forth in truth that which was the real and living Erskine, the light which shone from and transfigured his countenance, the music and tenderness which flowed from his voice! These were his, but they have perished with him. They revealed a presence which is not transferable, and cannot be recalled. It was a light which cannot be retained by us, a music of which, if his works give us the notes, we want the player and his instrument.

But the fact of our having seen and known it is surely something. Nay, is it not a proof irrefragable of the Divine itself? for it cannot be that we can imagine a higher thing than is; and we cannot but believe that which we have seen and heard; nor again can we believe that what we have seen and heard is all, or other than a fragment of that which is infinite elsewhere. Meanwhile that light is gone, and all that we have of Erskine is black and written paper. With this, however, those who knew him will be able, we think, to recall something of himself. To others it is scarcely possible. For his was a song without words, of which the words without the song are little: the song of a bird of spring, a song of the coming, not of the passing year; the song of one with whom it was ever May; an echo of "the everlasting chime;" a revelation of that unselfish Love which triumphs over all things, which rules the laws of a dead Nature, and moulds them into conformity with herself.

Should any one attempt to write the *life* of Mr. Erskine,

the difficulty must ever present itself to him that what he has to depict is spirit and not matter, that he has to convey light, to represent sound—an almost insuperable difficulty. Perhaps it can only in a measure be overcome by giving his very words, his thoughts, as they came fresh from his heart, in letters, memoranda, and such-like materials. This is, at least, an attempt in that direction. It will be evident from the tenor of these letters that they are often answers to queries or observations made by the Editor, some of which were hypothetically put, mainly to elicit the opinion of Mr. Erskine.

In case this paper should fall into the hands of any who have never heard of Mr. Erskine, the subjoined notice of him, which appeared in a leading newspaper at the period of his death, may not be without some interest. It is taken from the *Scotsman* of March 31, 1870, and is believed to be from the pen of Principal Shairp, of St. Andrews.

"On Monday, the 28th, his friends followed to their last resting-place, in the churchyard of Monifieth, by the Firth of Tay, the remains of Thomas Erskine of Linlathen, one of the most beautiful characters and original minds of a generation when Scotland had many great and good men. The announcement that he has passed from among us will not create any wide public sensation. For, though he was a power among men, it was not of the loud kind, but of the deep and still. In many a true and pure heart, however, far and near, the mention of his name will awaken a response of peculiar depth and tenderness. Though he had long

survived those with whom he began life, and most who knew him in his prime, he had not survived his friends. For his attractive and loving nature had drawn to him the hearts of a younger generation, who learned to love and revere him in his beautiful old age, and who will long retain him in affectionate remembrance.

"Mr. Erskine was born on the 13th October, 1788, of a race fertile in able men. His great grandfather—the first of his branch—was a younger son of the second Lord Cardross, a grandson of the Earl of Mar, so powerful in Scotland in the time of James the Sixth. Mr. Erskine's grandfather was the famous jurist, John Erskine of Carnock and Cardross, author of the 'Institutes of the Law of Scotland.' The eldest son of the author of the "Institutes" was the Rev. Dr. John Erskine, one of the clergymen of Greyfriars', and colleague of Principal Robertson. He was well known in his day as an able theologian; his life was written by Sir Henry Moncreiff. The father of Thomas Erskine, who was the youngest son of the jurist, died while he was a child, but his name is remembered even to this day among lawyers for his legal accuracy. His mother was one of the Grahams of Airth, and he was connected with the Stirlings of Kippenross, of Keir, and of Ardoch, and also with the Murrays of Abercairney. Much of his boyhood and youth was passed at these places and at Cardross, and to his recollections of Stirlingshire and Perthshire he always reverted with peculiar fondness. Many an anecdote, humorous or tender, he would tell of old Scottish life and manners, as he had known them seventy years since, in these ancient country-houses.

"He was called to the bar in 1810, when Walter Scott,

Jeffrey, and Cockburn flourished in vigour. He would describe the society of the bar, as it then was, rich in men of ability, and even genius, and in strong and varied character, but without much that was in sympathy with his own deeper and more devout convictions. We believe he never sought or obtained much law practice. But he was early relieved from this necessity, when, on the death of his elder brother in 1816, he succeeded to the family inheritance. Many, however, of his chief intimacies continued to be with members of the legal profession. To Lord Rutherfurd, Lord Fullarton, his cousin-german Lord Manor, and many more, however they may have differed in other respects, he was bound by ties of scholarly sympathy and old friendship, which ended only with their lives.

"But the distinguishing characteristic of Mr. Erskine—that which made him what he was—lay in the intense and pure religious faith that possessed him. This burned within him, a deep and steady central fire, absorbing, or rather transfiguring, his fine natural gifts and attainments—scholarship, refinement, humour, and powers of argument. To his loving nature that first truth of Christianity, that God is love, had come home with a power and totality of conviction which it is given to few to feel. Not an easy benevolence that makes little of sin, but a most righteous love, which will not leave men in their ignorance and sin, but longs evermore to bring them out of these, and make them sharers in his own righteousness—this was the faith in the character of God which animated his whole being, and which he desired to impart to others. It was this desire which first prompted him to authorship. His earliest work, on 'The Internal Evidence for Revealed Religion,' appeared about 1820, and

from this time on till his latest, on 'The Doctrine of Election,' which was published in 1837, his writings flowed in a continuous stream of chaste yet fervid eloquence, warm from the heart, full of beautiful illustration, and edged with subtle and penetrating dialectic. The prevailing characteristic of all his writings was their inwardness, their intense vitality, the appeal they made straight to the heart and conscience. His endeavour in them all was to hold up every doctrine to the illumination of conscience till light could be seen through it—till it became no longer opaque but transparent with a light direct from God. He believed that 'all doctrines are lights to guide us back to our long-lost Heavenly Father, and that if they serve not this purpose, they serve no purpose.' 'The only argument in religion,' he held, 'which is worth anything, is that which speaks to the heart.' Starting originally from the tenets of evangelical teaching, by which he had been profoundly influenced, he tried to show the reasonableness of all Scriptural truth, how altogether worthy it is of the character of God; how fitted to commend itself to the spirits of men. To take man out of his own selfishness and sin, that it may bring him back into sympathy with the will and character of God: this he regarded as the end of all revelation. These endeavours, it may be imagined, in time brought Mr. Erskine more or less into collision with prevailing systems. Not that any of his writings were polemical—they were too spiritual, too full of heart for this. But as he laboured to bring out the moral side of religion, and tried to get straight to the conscience, he thought he found hindrances in the way—hindrances arising not only from the unwillingness of men to be convinced, but even more from old dogmatic formulæ that had

long lain undigested, unappropriated by the Spirit. From whatever cause these hindrances might arise, in all his writings he set himself earnestly to cleanse the 'bosom of the perilous stuff that weighed upon the heart.'

"These books of his have long been out of print, and are hardly known to men of the present time. Though often asked in his later years to republish them, Mr. Erskine always declined to do so, from the belief, partly that they had done their work, partly that they did not adequately represent his maturer views. The latter belief is far less real than he imagined. Those who knew him best, as he was in his later days, will be surprised, on looking into these works, to see how much of his latest thinking they contain, and how entirely they are in keeping with all he ever thought and was.

"After Mr. Erskine had been known for about ten years as a spiritual teacher, there arose what was known in Scotland as the Row Movement. It was discredited, unfortunately, at the time by its supposed connection with a claim to the revival of miracles, and is known to many now only in this association. But between the claim to miracles and the doctrines taught by Mr. Campbell of Row, there was in reality no real connection, though they both appeared about the same time and near the same place. In his teaching, Mr. Campbell's aim was to remove obstructions which he conceived the dominant systems threw in the way of the reception of divine truth, and to bring home to men what he thought a more direct, more vital, and loving Gospel. Scotland has known no other so profound spiritual movement during the present century. But, being purely spiritual, and no ways political, as most religious movements among

us have more or less been, it did not excite in the ordinary public nearly so much interest as less important but noisier movements have done. Though starting independently, Mr. Campbell's teaching and spirit were in entire unison with all that Mr. Erskine had enforced in his books; and accordingly the latter threw himself into the Row Movement with characteristic ardour. When in 1830 the General Assembly deposed Mr. Campbell, and along with him the late Alexander Scott, Mr. Erskine felt that a grievous wrong had been done, and that the Church of Scotland, in casting out two of the most spiritual of her ministers, had inflicted on herself irreparable injury. Most candid persons are now of the same opinion. For Mr. Scott, Mr. Erskine entertained the highest regard and admiration, always speaking of him as the man with the most powerful grasp of spiritual truth whom he had ever known.

"Of Mr. Erskine's work on the 'Freeness of the Gospel,' Dr. Chalmers said that it was one of the most delightful books that ever was written. But more delightful than his books was his varied conversation. In society, reflection was lightened by humour, playfulness, and anecdote; sometimes his talk was ardent—always gentle and gracious. But it was when he was alone with one or two friends that all his heart came out, and that he would pour forth the full wealth of his religious meditations in an unbroken flow of deep thought, edged with subtle argument, and luminous with original illustration. It might be that a listener could not always go along with all his speculations, but no thoughtful and candid man ever came away from him without owning that it was good to hold converse with so devout and rarely gifted a spirit. For there was that in all

he said to stir not only men's inmost thoughts, but those feelings which are the parents of our thoughts. One of the most striking features of his character was his openness of mind—his readiness to hear the views of others. Whatever opinions men held, whatever perplexities they might feel, if only they were honest, no one need have feared to tell them to him. This enabled him to be of invaluable service to many whom other religious teachers could not reach, for from most of these, unfortunately, men hide their secret thoughts, because they fancy that, if they told them, they would find no sympathy. It was not so with Mr. Erskine. He heard them candidly, and 'studied to answer.' To many a distressed mind in all ranks of life, whom other teachers could not help, it is believed that he was enabled to speak the word which brought light and comfort to the heart.

"From about 1820 till 1845 Mr. Erskine spent many winters abroad—some in Rome or Geneva, more in Paris. There he became intimate with the most remarkable persons of their time, many of whom he numbered among his firm friends. It is said that the late Adolph Monod, the famous Protestant preacher, traced to a conversation with him, in the streets of Naples, his awakening from his originally Socinian views to the Evangelical faith, of which he afterwards became so earnest an advocate.

"On his home life at Linlathen it would not be becoming to dwell here. But none of the many who visited him there—neighbours high and low, guests from far and near—will ever forget it. No one, however great a stranger he might be when he entered that house, was a stranger long. A home of high thought it was, bright with the sunshine of

the soul, and warm with human-kindness and Christian charity.

"For many years past his winters were mostly spent in Edinburgh, and here, too, he exercised the same refined hospitality. 'What is the end of all social gatherings of men?' some one asks and answers, 'A little conversation, high, clear, and spiritual.' This result, so seldom attained, was found, if anywhere, at the board where Mr. Erskine presided. It will be remembered that a few years ago, when Mr. Carlyle re-visited Edinburgh, after many years, to be installed as Rector of the University, he was the guest of Mr. Erskine, his old and much-loved friend. With what wise and gracious courtesy did he then perform the duties of hospitality, on the one hand securing for his guest the repose he needed and desired, on the other according to as many as possible the much-desired privilege of meeting the sage of Chelsea! It was among the last of the occasions when he was allowed so to receive his friends. Soon after, by the removal of his two sisters, who had long been the earthly supports of his life, his house was left to him desolate. The remainder of his days was not exempt from the labour and sorrow which are the appointed portion of four-score years; but these he bore with becoming patience. He was able to go out and in till within ten days of the end, when he was prostrated by sudden illness. The end was as the life had been. So has passed from earth one of the noblest, most loving hearts, one of the 'sweetest spirits of the sons of men.' His image will survive, while life remains, deep in the affection of his many friends. The influence of his life and thought have combined, and will yet combine, to work for good, with whatever is truest and most benign in the tendencies of our time."

LETTERS TO THE BISHOP OF ARGYLL.

AUTHORITY AND LIGHT.

41, Charlotte Square, March 27, 1860.

MY DEAR BISHOP,—The process of all education is to commence with authority; and then as fast as possible to remove and advance the materials so received into the higher sphere of "knowledge." A child learns from its mother that two and two make four, and it holds this on her authority till the understanding develops so far as to apprehend that two and two must be four, although father and mother agree to call it five. Even so a child believes on the authority of its mother that there is a God, who sees him in the dark. His intellectual development enables him in this matter also to get out of authority, and to hold the truth in conscious knowledge. In this same way the principles received at first on the authority of Scripture, ought gradually to be transferred to the higher sphere, the authority, not of a book, but of God Himself, in the reason and conscience.

So beloved —— is gone to a nearer communion with

God. He was earnestly seeking it while he was here, and found a great treasure; he found that he could actually speak to God and receive responses; that is, he found that God was very nigh him, and that he could rejoice in His love and sympathy. —— has had an immense loss in him, which I am sure he will feel more and more. We have all had a great loss in him, for he was a real man seeking realities, and refusing to take up with shams and conventionalities of any kind.

Ever truly yours,

T. ERSKINE.

EDUCATION.

New Club, Edinburgh.
1860.

VESCOVO CARISSIMO,—

I have just returned from hearing Brougham, or rather from *seeing* him speak, for I heard very little. He made onslaughts on Napoleon, Queen Elizabeth, Lorenzo de Medici, David Hume, as an historian and an atheist, and many others. On the whole I have been rather tired. At the same time, I have it as a possession that I *was* there, and saw his face very near, making his oration.

I should like to have heard what he said about religion, natural and revealed, although the loss will be supplied at the expense of one penny, paid for a *Daily Scotsman*. The stress laid on religious belief is certainly an improvement on the earlier part of this century; at the same time, the

generality of it takes from its reality. The meaning of the Love of God does not come into such declamations, and without that, it is sounding brass: for as man without charity is, with all other gifts, only a sounding brass, so God, without that attribute recognised in its true meaning, is little better, in point of efficiency, on the character of the believer.

—— seems rather better than when I was at —— with you. His battle of life is likely to be a painful one; but, I doubt not, it will be well fought and bravely, and that eternal good will come out of it.

I cannot tell you how much importance seems to me to attach to the distinction between life being a *probation*, and being an education. The whole idea of punishment is essentially determined by which of these theories is accepted. In the first case it is due by the eternal obligation of justice; in the second it is a prudential appliance enforcing the importance of earnest endeavours after holiness. The hypothesis of an atonement being called for, in order to justify Divine justice in the pardon of sin, belongs necessarily to the first; the revelation of the character of God's love, and of that character in man, which constitutes his only possible blessedness, belongs to the second.

This is, I am afraid, scarcely intelligible; but if you don't understand me you can write and say so.

Ever affectionately yours,

T. ERSKINE.

P.S.—A father feels himself obliged to punish his son, only from a conviction that it will be useful to him.

THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD.

16, Charlotte Square.
1860.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—

There is something tremendous in the thought that even possibly all things are not working for good. If I could believe in the possibility of such a state of things, all that I could wish would be that I had never existed; that there had been no creation whatever. If the Creator cannot order things straight, or will not, there is nothing before us but blank despair. Do you not feel sure that it would be righteous in God to make all things work together for good? And are you not sure that He will do what is righteous? You do not believe that there are two kinds of righteousness? you are sure that it is in God's own light, you see that it is the highest righteousness to overrule things for good. I cannot admit your comparison of the action of Christianity amongst the great general deposit of common truths in man's heart, to the injection of fiery rocks through the old red sandstone; for I believe that that deposit is in fact Christianity, and that the revelation of Jesus Christ is the explanation of this deposit, showing whence it cometh and whither it goeth. These great truths are the πνεῦμα which Nicodemus heard, but without knowing their sources or their intimate purpose and landing-place. The belief that man's education will never cease until its end be accomplished is a great support. I rejoice always in the

prospect of seeing you; when you come here we can communicate our doubts and hopes and certainties.

Ever truly yours,

T. ERSKINE.

SACRAMENTS.

Linlathen, October 4, 1860.

MY DEAR BISHOP,—

I hope to meet you at —— on Friday, as I have written to ——. Neither his time nor mine is so valuable as yours, therefore you ought to be the fixer.

I am very sorry for you, and for the Episcopal Church in Scotland, under present circumstances. May the Lord guide your proceedings in wisdom and truth and love. I have this morning been reading the seventh chapter of St. Mark (the chapter for the day), and I was struck with the applicability of what our Lord there says to the Pharisees, to your discussion. If nothing which enters into the mouth can defile a man, may we not infer that nothing which enters into the mouth can purify a man. "Full well ye reject the commandment of God by your tradition."

Very truly yours,

T. ERKSINE.

MISSING THE MARK.

Linlathen, August, 1860.

MY DEAR BISHOP,—

I hope the waters of Ems have done your body good, and that you have been also trying to drink the water of life, which Christ is offering us *in all things* (St. John iv. 10), and which gives spiritual health. I know something of these watering-places, having experimented, both successfully and unsuccessfully, upon them and their virtues. You say it is *not a sinful life* which people lead there, only a forgetful or negligent and *do nothing* life. This is, at least, what I suppose you mean. Now what is the signification of ἁμαρτάνειν? It is to *miss the right mark.* It does not require that you should either commit murder or adultery, or even have any definite evil purpose. The right mark is to have the mind of Christ, to love God with the whole heart, and our neighbour as ourselves. On this principle I should suppose that there is abundance of sin in that watering-place life. Seeking that which is gratifying to the tastes and appetites as the object of life, and making it our object to avoid that which is ungratifying to them, IS SIN. Hungering and thirsting after righteousness is the exact opposite, and is what our Lord calls "blessed." The death of Christ seems to me to be the NOMOS of Christianity. "If ye die with Him, ye shall also live with Him." Christ has not redeemed us from the necessity of dying with Him, but from the necessity of seeking our good in self-gratification,

by revealing the holy love of God as our true life and portion and treasure.

My dear friend, are not these true things? They are more deeply true than our ordinary condition of mind is capable of conceiving, and I write them for my own sake as well as for yours, as a protest against that spiritual slothfulness which casts into a deep sleep. Any one of those apparently innocent watering-place loungers may be, and probably is, inhabited by a legion, which cannot go out but by prayer and fasting. The conviction of sin, of the true nature of sin, of its deadly poison, and of the deliverance from it, being only by a participation in Christ's death, and in His confidence in the Father's holy love, is a great part of Christianity. But we must live by faith and not by sight, if we would maintain this conviction of the true nature of sin; for if we live by sight we are prone to think of sin as a part of man's existence. But the light within us testifies altogether against such thoughts. It declares self-seeking to be one eternal evil, and righteous love one eternal good. To live by conscience is to live by faith. Not living under the power of seen things, but under the power of the world to come.

Ever affectionately yours,

T. ERSKINE.

SACRIFICE.

41, Charlotte Square, January 9, 1861.

MY DEAR BISHOP,—

Don't you yourself feel that the sacrifice of Christ was truly the sacrifice of *self* at the very root of the humanity? It is written in the Epistle to the Hebrews that "He put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself.'

Sin consists in self-seeking; and sin can therefore be put away by no other means than the sacrifice of self—a sacrifice, however, which must be reproduced in every soul of man before he is individually delivered from sin.

Christ's sacrifice cannot be unlike anything else in the world—it is the very type of what must be done by the spirit of Christ in every human being.

Yours affectionately,

T. ERSKINE.

SELF-SACRIFICE.

41, Charlotte Square, January 15, 1861.

MY DEAR BISHOP,—

What is the meaning of the words of our Lord, "Not my will, but thine be done?" and those others, "I came not to do mine own will, but the will of my Father?" Jesus Christ was truly a man, and truly tempted, although He always resisted temptation, and, therefore, had that in Him which could be tempted. He came into humanity, and went through the education of humanity, laying down self at

each step. He would not have been a *real man*, if He had not had that self in Him which would seek its own. And He was our Saviour by continually sacrificing that self, and by presenting Himself continually to His Father in every thought and word and deed—a perfectly loving and obedient son. His sacrifice was the work of His whole life, and this sacrifice is the basis and the soul of all true worship of God in man.

Unless Christ was truly a man, there was no revelation of the Father through Him to us. My human consciousness enables me to participate in the consciousness of Christ, and the human consciousness is capable of receiving the Divine consciousness.

Yours affectionately,

T. ERSKINE.

THE SACRIFICE OF SELF.

January 23, 1861.

Now, my dear friend, let me go back again to my last letter and to your answer. I do *not* consider it a mystery, that man should be called to die to himself as the only way of blessedness. I see that the blessedness of a spirit must consist in love; and that *love* implies the abnegation of self. But to look more minutely into the matter. I do not believe that a mortal being *could be created good;* taking goodness in its highest sense. Moral goodness really means *choosing to be good*, and no man can be *made* to choose, or

made as *having chosen;* he must himself choose. And in order to be in a position to choose, he must have at least two things before him. And what must these two things necessarily be? *Making self the great centre,* and *making God the great centre.* Every creature that has a personality must have in it a self, which tends to become the great centre, and if it is a moral creature, it has in it a light testifying that God's will is the true centre, and that every such personal creature is necessarily called on continually to choose between its own will and God's. This seems to me the necessary law of created moral beings. They could not be moral beings without it. The idea of God having created man such as He intended, and desired him to continue, appears to me not merely untrue, but irrational. Moral beings are created to be educated, and they must be fellow-workers in their own education.

Yours affectionately,

T. ERSKINE.

"ESSAYS AND REVIEWS."

41, Charlotte Square, February, 1861.

VESCOVO CARISSIMO,—

Your two enclosures are most interesting, and I should like to show them to Mr. ——. I have, of course, read Mr. ——'s book on Sacrifice, and I felt there, as in all his writings and speakings on the subject, the presence of that element of which he feels the absence both in Mr. ——

and in me. It is not, however, absent from my mind, only I feel a great difficulty in foreseeing anything like a clear idea of it. It is the redemption of humanity by its purgation in its root—the God-man, through His death and resurrection. I have been always accustomed chiefly to contemplate this in its reproduction, in the spirits of men, by the operation of the Holy Spirit, when it becomes part of our own personal conscious history. I have always felt ——'s language on this subject less clear than I could wish. I find this both in his book on Sacrifice, and in the remarks which he makes on ——'s book in the introduction to his Epistle of St. John. I believe that Christ's work on earth could not have been a mere *manifestation* of the loving purpose of the Father, but must have accomplished something, and that was the *purgation* of which I have spoken above. ——, like many others who feel with and for —— in his efforts against dead conventionality and traditionalism in Christianity, and who yet feel that there are many very objectionable things in that book of "Essays and Reviews" (from all complicity in which he cannot easily clear himself), is lovingly desirous to get evidence of the good and godly impression which his character, and conversation, and discoveries have made on the minds of those who have come in contact with him, evidence that might separate him from the general spirit of that book. No man can long more for an agreement between our Christianity, and our conscience, and spiritual reason, than I do, but I do not think this is to be effected by such works as the "Essays and Reviews."

It is not by such criticisms that man can be helped to read and understand the Bible. This is the eighth day of the month, and I have been reading the Psalms and lessons for the day, and I find in all the portions of Scripture so widely separated from each other in point of time, and in the circumstances of the writers, the breathing of the Holy Spirit, so revealing to man, as no other voice ever did, his true condition before God, and drawing him up out of that horrible pit, with an apprehension of his Heavenly Father's unchangeable purpose of holy love towards him, and helping him to rise into fellowship with the heart, where that purpose ever lives, as an everlasting ground of hope and consolation, that after reading these words I have felt that when some gentlemen of cultivated faculties combined their efforts to enlighten their countrymen in the nature and structure of that book (so that it might be studied with intelligence and profit), a *very* different result was to have been expected, from that which they have actually accomplished.

Every one who has read the Bible with real earnestness, must have felt that its chief object was to help man to know God, and to know themselves in His light, and so be led to receive His Spirit, and to become temples of the Holy Ghost. Surely then, if we find this chief object ignored and unnoticed in dissertations written to elucidate the character of the book, we must at least admit that by this omission a very grave mistake has been committed. I am reading them over, so that I may not form my own

judgment on quotations picked out by those who have assailed them in the periodical press.

I have finished the first, and find nothing to condemn in it; but it, I suppose, is the most innocent of the seven, with, perhaps, the exception of the last, whose author is, I know, a thorough believer in *subjective* Christianity at least, and is an earnest man. In fact it is more what they have left unsaid, than what they have said that I grieve for; although I feel that a miraculous previous history, such as that of the Jews, according to the Old Testament record, is required as the preparation for the appearance of Jesus Christ. It is required also as the explanation of the difference between the religious knowledge of the Jews and that of all other nations. Does not a miraculous dispensation seem the reasonable and necessary concomitant of that wonderful light shining in the midst of gross darkness? God thus taught the people, that they were not to be the slaves of matter, but to be the free children of Him who governs all things. The miracles of the Bible are not *marvels*, but illustrations of the character of God, and prophecy in the continual witnessing that in God alone is the redemption of man, and that the redemption is to be accomplished by the way of sorrow, and suffering, and death.

Very truly yours,

T. ERSKINE.

THE LOVE OF GOD.

14, Charlotte Square, March 30, 1861.

MY DEAR BISHOP,—

When I last wrote, I left unanswered a thing you asked—namely, "What I thought the love of God meant?" I believe that it is like the love of a good human father, which above all things longs and desires for his child that he may be good, not withholding any trouble or suffering either on his own part or his child's, that may be conducive to this end. I cannot form any idea of moral affections in any being whatsoever which are not of the same type, and I believe that there can be no other.

I see that —— has republished some of his old sermons, with an introduction, bearing on the "Essays and Reviews." I shall try and get a sight of it. I should like to see a wise and kindly answer to the said book; but it will require much wisdom and much simplicity. My chief fear is that timid people may be driven to a stronger adherence to all that is conventional and traditional, from the idea that they will lose all hold of Christianity unless they do so. I rejoice in the destruction of false foundations of confidence, that the true one may stand out, and be acknowledged and more felt than it has been. And yet I feel that tenderness is due to all earnest men, though in some respects ignorant or prejudiced.

Yours very truly,

T. ERSKINE.

FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD.

14, Charlotte Square, May 8, 1861.

MY DEAR BISHOP,—

I am sorry to find you are not well. I can only wish that you may learn the lesson intended to be conveyed by it, that you may enter into a more inward and more uninterrupted fellowship with God, and by a continual adoption of His will may be continually taking hold of eternal life. There is something very melancholy in reading daily such words as "Rejoice in the Lord alway," and yet be obliged to satisfy ourselves by thinking that it would be a very desirable thing to do so, or still lower with thinking that Christianity is a very interesting subject of investigation.

Affectionately yours,

T. ERSKINE.

MORAL TRAINING.

14, Charlotte Square, May 21, 1861.

MY DEAR BISHOP,—

I am much surer of my own consciousness than of anything in the outward world, and I am quite sure that when I condemn sin, and grieve over it and its consequent misery, I am doing so in agreement with Him who gave me my spiritual nature, and thus the existence of sin and misery does not lead me to suppose that God is indifferent to them, nor does it in the smallest degree affect my confidence in His love and righteousness. I feel that

He condemns my own sin in order to deliver me from it, and that it is no hardness in Him which appoints my misery as a discipline; and this feeling of His attitude towards my own sin and misery extends itself, necessarily, to all cases in the spiritual universe. I feel myself to be under a teaching of God, in which I am called to be a fellow-worker. And this feeling of my own condition extends itself in like manner through the spiritual universe. I believe that God's purpose in my being is to teach me to receive Himself, His own spirit, nature, character, into me; and I believe that He has the same purpose for all spiritual beings. How long it may be before the end is attained, I don't attempt to conjecture; but of this I am sure, that His search after the lost sheep will not cease until he has found it.

I believe that God's purpose in creating spiritual beings is to educate them, that they cannot be *made good*, in the full sense of the word, and therefore that it is a great mistake to call our present state, a state of probation, as if we were here on trial. This idea gives a wrong interpretation to conscience; it makes us feel as if we were continually standing before a judgment-seat, instead of being in our Father's school. Nothing gives me such a conviction of the infinite love of God as the minute vigilance which He exercises over the various shades of thought and feeling, and the deep expression of judgment on them which He communicates. It is His own personal presence within us that is thus acting on us, as if he had nothing else to occupy Him.

This is the true light, which lighteneth every man. My conscience is two things—first, a spiritual faculty capable of receiving that light; secondly, the presence of that light. This is the Gospel which St. Paul preached to the Colossians (i. 25—27). He is there not to condemn me, but to save me; that is to say, condemnation is not the end, but the means. He condemns me, that He may teach me, and save me. He does not teach me, that He may have ground to condemn me. All this condemnation is love. His wrath is love.

He suffers and grieves and is wroth with my sin, and He calls on me to suffer and grieve and be wroth with Him; or rather, to receive His suffering, grieving, wrath into my being. (Then the wrath is pacified.)

Mr. —— will feel how very much the idea of atonement is affected by our assuming that we are not in a state of trial, but in a state of education, thus looking nearer to the actual state than to the past. He will also feel how much that same idea is affected by our interpreting the outward history by the inward consciousness.

The true light *is* the Saviour, the Redeemer. But humanity is a great whole. I am not an independent *cosmos*, I am part of a great cosmos; a one body which has many members—which has a head. The head is not simply the true light; the head is a member, an organ, of the body—a human organ, which requires education, as the inferior members. It was trained to enter into the grief and wrath of the Father at the sin of man, of every man,

entering into that grief, that wrath, as the head of the sinful family, entering into them fully; acknowledging the righteousness of the condemnation and *the love of it*, declaring this not in word only, but in act. Then is God's wrath pacified towards the body, as He looks forward to the accomplishment, through the body, of that which has been thus accomplished in the head.

This is not so satisfactory as I could wish, but I cannot trust myself to write another letter. I have sometimes thought of printing a fuller edition of this treatise.

Ever truly yours,

T. ERSKINE.

"STRONG IN THE LORD."

Linlathen, December 8, 1861.

VESCOVO CARISSIMO,—

I am sure that you have been drenched with rain amongst your mountains and lochs. I hope the inward man has had some counteracting influences working in it, and strengthening it, as St. Paul had, when he said, "as the outward man perisheth the inward man is renewed day by day." Dear St. Paul! what a noble spirit he was, ever holding by the Lord, and receiving strength out of Him, so that he would say, "When I am weak, then am I strong." This is what we require to know, not as a saying but as a reality.

If I live till next Sunday I shall have completed my

seventy-third year, and I have scarcely yet got over the idea that I am a young man; yet I have many warnings.

Brethren, pray for me. Let me hear from you,

And believe me ever affectionately yours,

T. ERSKINE.

"BORN FROM ABOVE."

Linlathen, September 15, 1863.

VESCOVO MIO,—

I feel ashamed as well as gratified by the confidence you express in me. I am not a prophet, nor the son of a prophet, but gatherer of sycomore fruit. Nevertheless, as far as in me lies, I shall rejoice to be helpful to ——, helpful in helping him to take hold of God's help. One great law of the kingdom is, "He that hath, to him shall be given; and from him that hath not, shall be taken even that he hath." This precious possession to which all things else are added, and without which nothing else can really be held, must be spiritual life; the spiritual ear opened, the spiritual eye opened. To those who have not these all things are in parables; to those who have these all parables are explained—the mysteries of the kingdom are unfolded. The relations of life, the events and duties of life are parables, to those who do not spiritually discern them. Christianity itself is a parable to them. "Verily I say unto you, ye must be born from above; for except a man be

born from above, he cannot see the kingdom of God," nor understand what he reads or hears about it.

Yours ever affectionately,

T. ERSKINE.

BLESSEDNESS.

Linlathen, October 25, 1863.

MY DEAR BISHOP,—

The difficulty is to drive into the head and hearts of ignorant unthinking people, that goodness is the only true name for blessedness, and that therefore the hope for man is simply the hope that God will continue to insist upon his being righteous, until he actually becomes so.

I agree with what you say both as to —— note and ——'s. To the former, however, I would say, that Christ is in the man, unconverted as well as converted, although he is not living by the life of Christ; and that this was in fact the Gospel which St. Paul preached (Colossians i. 27). I feel for myself that I am helped by reading the Prophets, and finding there the most fearful denunciations, and the most unconditional assurances of final good side by side. Read, for example, the 10th of Jeremiah, and compare it with what goes before and follows after it, as the 19th chapter from verse 11 and 13, "As one breaketh a vessel that *cannot be made whole* again," and yet it was to be made whole again.

These prophecies give the idea of many judgment days,

and many destructions which appear to be final and yet are not so. Those words, "Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good," seem to me full of assurance. What God calls on us to do, He most certainly will do Himself. And still more important on this subject is the idea, that God made man to educate him, not to judge him.

Yours affectionately,

T. ERSKINE.

THEOLOGY, KNOWLEDGE OF GOD.

3, Charlotte Square, January, 1864.

MY DEAR BISHOP,—

I must make my protest against the principle that Theology is nothing more than Biblical criticism, or an interpretation of texts and words. The blessed hope that you and I cherish for the ultimate salvation of all, is, I think, fully borne out by distinct unequivocal declarations in the Scriptures—Romans, chaps. v. and xi. But the spirit of the whole Scripture, notwithstanding apparent superficial contradictions, is all in the same direction.

The restitution of all things is the bright goal held before us to animate exertion, whilst it gives the continual assurance, that it is only through holiness that it can be reached. The consent of a mind to remain in suspense on such a point because of *any* supposed uncertainty in the word αἰωνίος, seems to me a sad phenomenon. "Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good," ought, I think, to

decide the question; it is the character of God. He is love, and created man to be partaker in His own holiness, and will He be overcome of evil?

Yours very truly,

T. ERSKINE.

ETERNITY OF EVIL.

3, Charlotte Square, February 1, 1864.

MY DEAR BISHOP,—

The question of the eternity of evil has a difficulty in it beyond what appears at first. If we suppose eternal creation, we can scarcely escape from the eternity of evil. I believe that there is a continual contest, and a successful contest, of good and God against evil: but I believe also that whilst the creation of moral agents with free wills continues, the evolution of evil from these free wills will take place. Thus the *eternal existence* of evil is a quite distinct idea from the *permitted permanency* of evil.

What your Charge I suppose meant to suggest was, that God always must contend, and contend successfully, against evil, and never consents to its permanency. The eternity of evil, if true, does not arise from the permanency of evil, but from ever new creation of free-will agents, who in their progress evolve evil.

I remain, yours always,

T. ERSKINE.

THE GROUND OF TRUTH.

New Club, Edinburgh, May 18, 1864.

VESCOVO CARISSIMO,—

I rejoice to see your hand-writing again, and that by its firmness you are making progress.

I should like to leave my pamphlet in a printable condition, hoping that it may help some people who would welcome help, though in a form to which they have not been accustomed.

To see that the truth of a revelation does not depend on its being revealed, either miraculously or otherwise, would be for many a step in advance. The revelation does not make it true; it must have been true before if it is true now, and its truth must be tried and made out by other tests; just as Newton's discoveries were not made true by his discovering and declaring them.

That the distinguishing feature of righteousness in God is the desire to communicate righteousness and not to exact penalties, seems to me a great principle.

Yours affectionately,

T. ERSKINE.

"THEY SHALL BE ALL TAUGHT OF GOD."

Keir, June 18, 1864.

VESCOVO CARISSIMO,—

I have been looking over ——'s letter to ——, and with some hope that it may help many, if it is quietly and

impartially considered. You know that I believe that the Bible was given to us, not to be cited as a peremptory authority in anything, but as help to us to understand the character of God, and the relation in which we stand to Him; so that I should regard it as a misuse of it were I to allow any particular passages in it to outweigh the general instruction which it contains on these points, and yet I can say that those passages which give the most direct utterance on the subject of the final destiny of man seem to me to be most unequivocal declarations of universal deliverance. The general instruction is that God *desires* to make men righteous, that He created them that He might train them into righteousness; a participation in His own righteousness; that they are thus, not in a state of *probation*, but in a state of *education*. I believe that *being good* means *choosing to be good*, and that men are brought into existence that they may be taught to make this choice. I believe that a righteous Father must desire to make His children righteous, and that He would cease to be a righteous Father the moment He ceased to desire this. I believe that this righteousness is the same thing as *love*, of which it is said that *it never faileth*. I feel that my belief in the unfailingness of this love, or this righteousness, is, in fact, my belief in God, and that I should be an atheist if I would give up this belief. In this I agree with Pusey, as far as my own conscious perception and conviction go. I think that the God who will not be overcome of evil, but who will overcome with good, is a different Being from any supposed

God who allows the persistency of evil. My confidence in God rests in this, that I am sure He desires to make me a good man, at whatever cost of suffering may be necessary. I can absolutely and entirely trust the Being who desires this for me, and who will persevere in desiring it, and following it out for ever. I could not trust in any other being. I believe in this, as the *heart of all creeds and of all Churches;* and I should consider a man a real Christian who believed in this, though he rejected all the creeds. If I was created to be *tried*, that is, if I am in a state of probation, and not of education, that is, if God will do what is called *justice* to me, I could have no trust in Him, for I should not consider Him a righteous Father; I should look on him, not as a wise and righteous Ruler and Father, but as a sort of Justice Clerk, who was merely the interpreter of laws put into His hands, and which He was bound to interpret according to their natural meaning.

But now to leave the general instruction which the Bible gives as to the character of God, and to go to particular passages referring to the final destination of man, let me ask you to re-read the 5th and 11th chapters of the Epistle to the Romans. It seems to me impossible to read those two chapters without the conviction that St. Paul, at least, was fully persuaded that all men should finally be saved. In the 5th he contrasts the loss of Adam with the gain of Christ, and whilst he puts them exactly on a par in point of extent, he claims a superabundance of blessedness for the latter over the condemnation of the former. Nothing can be

clearer than this. But proceed now to the 11th chapter. The Apostle begins by saying that it would not be fair to say that God had cast away His people, because it was evident and undenied that *some* were not cast away; but still he acknowledged that though there was an election that had obtained what they sought for, yet the nation, as a nation, had failed to obtain it; nay more, that they were blinded, and under a judicial sentence of spiritual slumber and blindness, and deafness, as it is written in the 7th verse, "Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for, but the election hath obtained it, and the *rest were blinded.*" So here we have the election satisfactorily disposed of; and we are invited to follow the Apostle in what he sees of the future history of the *rest who were blinded.* This future history he takes up at the 11th verse. "I say then, Have they stumbled that they should fall? God forbid! impossible, but rather through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles to provoke *them* to jealousy." Now read the 12th verse, and the 15th and 16th verses; then go on to the 25th and 26th verses; and so to the end of the chapter; and then say whether in your conscience you can believe that St. Paul did not intend to teach the final salvation of all men; for it must be of all men if it is of all the Israelites; and to suppose that such a word as this could really have an honest fulfilment, by the conversion and salvation of some distant future generation of Jews, whilst all the intermediate generations were left to perish, appears to me gross trifling with the character of God. Strange as it appears, I have found

very few people who have read the 11th chapter with real attention. With —— I feel the question to be more and more essential every day.

Yours affectionately,

T. ERSKINE.

ILLNESS.

Linlathen, June 30, 1864.

MY DEAR BISHOP,—

I am sorry to think that you are so unwell, you must learn, or rather *we* must learn, to take such circumstances, not as interruptions of our life-work, but as that very life-work and life-lesson which our Father intends for us. It may be that we have both of us been more occupied in excogitating answers to unanswered difficulties than in acquainting ourselves with God himself. I have heard God say that to *me*, and I have felt the truth and the voice of the reproof, and desire to profit by it.

With regard to ——'s difficulty, it seems to me a mere fancy. With regard to Newman's question, I think there is an excellent answer to it in Campbell's "Thoughts on Revelation," from page 16 onwards till the 26th. Read it, my dear friend, *not fast*, not merely to possess yourself of his answer, but seeking to stand in the light which alone can really satisfy.

If I knew Newman, I think I should ask him to read that passage and the whole book. Mr. Campbell there

speaks of the true meaning of receiving the kingdom of heaven *as a little child* in a way which commends itself to my conscience and my spiritual understanding, and which I think might commend itself to him. The difference between blind submission and the sympathy of sonship is immense.

That we are actually at each step of life under a divine guidance and purpose seems to me a discovery that has to be made over and over again. I am just now laid up, unable to walk ten yards, and may probably remain in that condition through the summer, in consequence of my doctor dealing with me too strongly, and I have found the temptation to regard this as a stupid accident interfering much with the profitable use of it.

Yours affectionately,

T. ERSKINE.

GOD'S PROVIDENCE.

Linlathen, July 15, 1864.

WELL-BELOVED FRIEND,—

May the Father of Mercies make himself known and felt by you, as ever near you, and blessing you, and choosing your path and lot for you. I shall daily think of you in His presence amongst those with whom He has brought me into close fellowship. If He sees it good, He will restore you to the capacity of work; and if He does not see it good, it cannot be good. "Thy will be done."

I am getting old and stupid, and cannot tell you the

difficulty I find in writing anything to my own satisfaction. I sometimes think I could accomplish my purpose more easily and surely by writing two or three letters, which I could get printed. There are one or two subjects, which, before I depart out of this world, I should like to lay before the eyes of men. Farewell for the present.

Yours affectionately,

T. ERSKINE.

THE PLACE OF AUTHORITY.

Linlathen, August 17, 1864.

VESCOVO CARISSIMO,—

I am delighted to receive *any* communication from you, though I should certainly prefer having it in a form which would enable me to read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest it; but this is impossible until *you* get better paper, or *I* get better eyes, and a more prophetical intelligence, discerning light even in obscurity. I have, however, got hold of some of your thoughts, chiefly on the question of authority, which is one on which we have often talked, and on which we are sure that all thinking men must agree in principle, however much they may differ in statement.

It is as clear as day that, however true a truth may be, it can never have its full legitimate influence over me and value to me, until I discern the truthfulness of it; but I require to be gradually educated into the discernment of its truthfulness; and authority is an indispensable element

in this education. A child must begin in knowledge of numbers by believing on the authority of its teacher that twice two is four, yet no one even supposes that the child has really learned the truth on this matter until it is in a condition to reject any authority that would try to give it the idea that twice two is five. Even so in religious truth we must begin with authority: the child is to be educated into the discernment of truth, and we know that in regard to much in this department of thought, nine hundred and ninety-nine out of every thousand remain children to the rest of their lives. At the same time, the object of the true teacher will always be to help the child (whether he be young or old) to discern the truthfulness of the truth, and this is to be done by helping it from a lower step to a higher, by letting it perceive the connection between them, just as a child, after it has perceived that twice two is four, may be helped to see that twice four is eight. Thus a child may soon understand that God wishes it to be good, if it has the good fortune to have a father or mother who it feels wishes it to be good, and when it has got the knowledge in this way, it has hold of the truth, not on authority, but really. In the same way it may learn that God's purpose in punishing it is to make it good, and that the meaning of God's goodness in relation to it is that He will use the fittest treatment (whether pain or pleasure) to make it good. It may then go on to learn that real trust in God means a confidence that His purpose in all that He does is to make it good. It is quite evident that the duty of faith in God

might be taught as a dogma resting on the authority of Catechism or Scripture for a hundred years without the slightest good, because the old child has never discerned the truthfulness of the truth. Now, as I believe that all the dogmas of Revelation are connected with that primal truth, their truthfulness must be discerned in the light of that truth before they can do the work they are intended for. The true teaching of Christianity is helping men to see that the work of Christ is simply the declaration of and carrying out of this primal truth, that God's purpose is to make men good. For my own part, I feel that I believe the Bible because of the things that I find in it, rather than that I believe them because they are in the Bible.

I believe that if it were generally adopted as a fundamental truth that man was created, *not to be tried, but to be educated*, it would help to clear the way both of teachers and of learners very much. The idea that we are in a state of trial or probation *necessarily* forces us *to look on God as a Judge*, and forces us also to be more occupied with the forgiveness of sins than with a deliverance from sinfulness. It is this idea which has given its character of substitution to the life and death of Christ, representing it as the ground on which God is justified in forgiving men, rather than as the actings of the root of the human tree, by which the sap is prepared for and propelled into the branches. It seems to me also that it is this idea which has made eternal punishment to be received as a principle in God's government. If it were believed that God had created us for

education, and that not one in a thousand had really received any education, it would generally be accepted without hesitation that the education must necessarily proceed in the next world.

Oh, the depth of His love! Of a father in this world, we should say that he is righteous when he seeks to make his children righteous; and that the moment he ceases to desire this, he ceases to be righteous. And is not this true of God? If ye being evil have right desires for your children, how much more should the righteous Father have such desires for all?

"Unto Thee, O Lord, belongeth *mercy*, FOR Thou rewardest every man according to his works." The wise physician renders to the body according to its works—according to its circulation and digestion and sensations: and the wise physician of the soul renders to it in like manner according to its condition, according to its shortcomings and transgressions.

I hope the Great Physician's treatment may be profitable both for your soul and body.

Yours very truly,

T. ERSKINE.

ETERNAL PUNISHMENT.—(RENAN.)

Linlathen, October 5, 1864.

VESCOVO CARISSIMO,—

Our faith in the eternity of punishment is as hurtful a dogma as the Real Presence or Transubstantiation, interfering woefully with all trust in God. I have been lately struck with the direct contradiction of *that faith* in the 11th chapter of Romans. I am surprised that any one can resist it.

Then as to the infallibility of the Bible; it is quite evident that the object of the Bible is not to teach us to receive things as truths, but to teach us to apprehend the truth of the truths. The beginning of the 13th chapter of Deuteronomy is very strong; for this—we are not to be led away either by miracles or prophecies—we are to know the truth of things ourselves. Confidence in an infallible authority has just the other tendency. It comes as a substitute for the perception of truth.

I wonder whether such books as the "Maudit" and the "Religieuse" can find their way into Italy. Even in France they are published without the name of the writer, probably because he is a priest. They are written with considerable talent, and with a keen sense of existing evils, and they are read with an avidity which shows how much the popular mind goes along with them; but we must remember that Rénan was and is read with still greater avidity. But I am not surprised at it, as genuine Chris-

tianity has never been known amongst these people, or even among the more educated classes. *This* ought to be the great object with those who wish to help them, to *explain genuine Christianity, its reasonableness, and its blessed strength and consolation.*

Affectionately yours,

T. ERSKINE.

THE MEANING OF PUNISHMENT.

31, Charlotte Square, December 3, 1864.

MY DEAR BISHOP,—

I would put the question, "Is it conceivable that a creature with a free will could be MADE GOOD? for, does not the goodness of such a being necessarily consist in *choosing to be good?*" If so, *it cannot be* MADE *good*, and must be trained to choose the right choice. This principle being accepted, I do not see any contradiction in the actual history and condition of men on this earth, to what I believe to be the nature and attribute of God, but an entire agreement.

Then, I would put another question, What is the purpose of punishment? Is it merely a retribution, or is it essentially a corrective and ameliorating process? Is it to bind men down in sin, or to deliver them from sin?

Then a third question, Is God unchangeable, or is His character in Revelation to man changeable and dependent on man's being in this world or in the next? Whilst man

is in this world, all punishment is intended for his good, as it is written, "God afflicteth not willingly, but for our profit, that we may be partakers of His holiness." Is there another rule of things for the other world? I believe that there is no *true* or *profitable* conviction possible, except through the reason and conscience. The conviction that rests on any outward authority whatever, must from its very nature be superficial; and thus our profitable belief in the Bible must be limited by our apprehension of the reasonableness and righteousness of the things contained in it.

I do not presume to reject anything in the Bible because it does not meet my reason or conscience, but I know that it only then does me any good, and sinks into my soul, when I do apprehend its reasonableness and righteousness. It is therefore my endeavour always to arrive at this apprehension.

Yours most truly,

T. ERSKINE.

RENAN.—NEWMAN.

31, Charlotte Square, Edinburgh, December 10, 1864.

VESCOVO MIO CARISSIMO,—

I have this morning been reading a letter from you to ——, and "my pure mind has been stirred up by way of remembrance," as St. Peter expresses it, to the effect of inducing me to write you a few lines.

I was at ——, and —— was there. He is not *on the*

defensive, which is an attribute very common, and very unpromising and unpleasant to deal with. And yet, perhaps, an easiness which accepts everything is still worse. In fact, what we require is neither laxness nor stiffness, but a hunger and thirst after truth, and nothing but the truth.

You recollect that I was reading Rénan's "Vie de Jésus" when you were in Edinburgh. Since then, innumerable reviews and answers to it have appeared, more or less helpful; but none that I have seen have attempted to throw light on the divine nature of Jesus Christ, and till that is done, Rénan, to my mind, remains unanswered. I have been jotting down thoughts and suggestions on this matter, which I have found helpful to my own mind; whether they may meet the minds of others I cannot say, for minds are so various. But I am sure that no argument outside of the thing itself can be of much use. We require to see *light in the thing*, as we see light in the statement that twice two make four.

You probably have met with Newman's "Apologia pro vita sua," which has all the interest inseparable from the faithful history of a mind, however different that mind may be from your own. His first real religious feelings came to him through the Evangelicals. "Scott's Commentary on the Bible" was the book, and I think Doddridge also awakened something in him. But he soon felt a craving for a Church which might be the antagonist of sin in the world. Then he felt a need of an infallible guidance. He had early given up all idea of the possibility of *certainty*—

all that he looked for was an accumulation of probabilities.

I am thankful that I feel certain that God's purpose towards me is that I should be a good man, a partaker in His own righteousness and in his own blessedness. And this, as it seems to me, involves the certainty that God is Love, which is further confirmed to me by the assurance that love is the best thing in the universe; and that God must be that best thing. I am perfectly certain that what ought to be, really is, or eventually will turn out to be.

Our love to you and Lady Alice, and best wishes for health, temporal and spiritual, and the peace which passeth all understanding.

Very affectionately yours,

T. ERSKINE.

TRUE REVERENCE.

31, Charlotte Square, April 14, 1865.

VESCOVO REVERENDISSIMO AND CARISSIMO,—

It seems to me that we are only then showing reverence to God when we are striving to enter into His meaning and purpose in all that He has set before us. Jesus says, All who are of the truth are my subjects, and we cannot be of the truth, unless we discern the truth. We are not of the truth, whilst we take it for granted and do not apprehend it. He says in the same place, "They shall be all taught of God; whosoever, therefore, hath

heard and learned of the Father cometh unto me." Each individual is called to see it for himself.

The good Lord keep you in the sense of His continual nearness, and of His continual desire for our sympathy in His dealings with us, and that we should seek this sympathy in all our thoughts, and words, and actions.

Yours affectionately,

T. ERSKINE.

DEATH.

Linlathen, June 10, 1865.

MY DEAR BISHOP,—

This is a great affliction. All who know dear —— felt he filled a great space in their minds, and will probably feel this more now that he is removed than they had thought. I was thankful to have been there, so as to have met his love again before he was taken home. But I felt most deeply my own unhelpfulness. "Be ye also ready." This is his funeral day.

Yours ever truly,

T. ERSKINE.

NOBILITY OF CHARACTER.

Linlathen, June 20, 1865.

MY DEAR BISHOP,—

Beloved ——, his face is seldom absent from me, and the thought of the way he would look at things con-

stantly presents itself. I never loved a man so well, from whom I could expect so little sympathy in any of the trains of speculative thought, which were peculiarly interesting and occupying to myself. But there was a substance of goodness and nobleness in his character, which could both give and receive a deeper sympathy, than *mere thought could.* I had given him a special place in my habitual prayers; so that now the remembrance of him always recurs at the stated times, and sometimes I find I can commit him to the care and loving guidance of our Father, just as when he was with us. I feel myself nearer the grave sensibly than I used to do. I feel that this is not my rest, and that I must shortly quit my present tabernacle.

Ever affectionately yours,

T. ERSKINE.

"DOING EVIL THAT GOOD MAY COME."

Linlathen, August 24, 1865.

MY DEAR BISHOP,—

Your question about God doing evil that good may come—doing an evil moreover which we distinctly see, to produce an assumed good which we do not see—is one which has probably at times darkened most minds. The answer which my mind makes to itself is, that the spiritual education of individuals, and not the outward ordering of society is God's great object. Righteous causes in the world are often overborne by unrighteous power, and yet

the man who suffers for the defeated righteous cause completely justifies God in his own heart, giving Him credit for a purpose of training which he finds realized in his own experience. The Mahometan ship arriving after the king's prayer that the ship of the true faith should come first, belongs to the same class of things. Is not the way of the Lord unequal? Whenever a man lives in this world as if it *were all*, the way of the Lord must appear unequal. What a monstrous thing in appearance it seems that I should come into existence with a predisposition to malice, and envy, and pride, and sensuality; and then that I should, in the ordering of my lot, have every opportunity afforded me of gratifying these evil inclinations. Nothing but that life is an education can give a meaning of righteousness to this fact.

I do not believe that the eternal life spoken of by our Lord has anything to do with mere existence, as the opposite—death—is no cessation of existence.

It seems to me that God's eternal, unchangeable, and unalterable purpose of making all men righteous, combined with His perfect wisdom and knowledge, is the only explanation of the wholesale slaughter of Canaanites and Perrizzites, &c. If a surgeon knows to a certainty that he can cure a man of cancer or frightful neuralgia by putting a knife through the part, he would be wrong not to do it. It is a great help to apprehend the immense difference between a man becoming good by choice and being made good whether he will or not, and the necessarily great superiority

of the one goodness over the other, and hence to infer the righteousness of all means used to produce the former. God does me no injustice whatever misery he may subject me to, if He is by it leading me to this. The smallest unnecessary suffering I protest against; but any suffering which is needed to press me into eternal life, eternal righteousness, I accept with my whole reason and choice, however much I may shrink from it whilst it is upon me. One is apt to forget that the small annoyances of life constitute parts of this process. If I can remove them I consider myself entitled to do so, but I am wrong if I do this with no other thought than to get rid of a burthen. There is a supernatural element in all my circumstances which is nothing less or lower than the will of God, and I ought to handle it reverently.

I should much like to have a few days with you, but I fear I ought not to venture so far from home. I shall be seventy-seven in October—very near the conclusion certainly! It is a wonderful thought the passing through the veil.

Yours most truly,

T. ERSKINE.

THE ORIGIN OF EVIL—FAITH.

Linlathen, September 16, 1865.

MY DEAR BISHOP,—

I return you these letters; very unsatisfactory they are. There is certainly wisdom as well as ingenuity in the

query—(the origin of evil)—but it does not affect my object at all. I am not searching into the origin of evil. I merely say that, as a spiritual being is only good by choosing to be good, it needs to be educated into this choice of goodness, and cannot be made good in the truest and highest sense. Those who suppose that this goodness could be *created* or *made*, can never understand the spectacle of this world. They think that God might have saved an enormous amount of sin and misery by creating men permanently good at once. I do not feel that I am beating my head against an insoluble difficulty when I maintain that the goodness which God desires to see in men is a goodness which in the nature of things can *only result* from a process of educational exercise. I believe that every human being is intended to occupy a particular place in the great organized body of the humanity of which Christ is the Head, and that a suitable course of education will be applied to each one, through all the stages of his existence, until he is made fit to fill this place.

And when I further see that the great object of God in this education is to make man sensible that he *requires God in everything*, that he can do *nothing* rightly without God, then I can understand, that there may be a real progress in this education, even by all the down-breakings which men make in life. I see that *faith* and *recipiency* are one thing. The righteousness of faith is God received into man's will, as his only possible portion and refuge—"Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done." But a *belief* in the inextinguish-

able loving purpose of God is necessary as the basis of this *faith.*

I am thankful to be able in my own mind, in my own reason, to justify the ways of God to man. I am thankful to be able to give God glory in all his dealings with myself and my race.

The 107th Psalm is *full* of light and love. It gives the explanation of God's providential government. The last verse is delightful. —— does not see that the revelation of a spiritual truth means, *presenting and explaining it to our spiritual understanding.* It can do me no good until it comes in contact with my own spiritual understanding—until I see its eternal truth and reasonableness. It is not really revealed to me till then. Even though a man may not have faculty to discern a truth, he may perceive its reasonableness, *after* it has been discovered to him, as is the case with thousands in relation to the discoveries of Newton. The revelation is not really made to them until they understand it—and when they do understand it, *the more they feel their obligation to Newton, the less will they be dependent on his authority.*

In like manner, the more I feel my obligation to the Bible, the less shall I feel dependent on its authority. I see the truth of Christianity, thanks be to the Bible; but I do not lose Christianity now, though you took the Bible from me.

I would also say to ——, "I don't deny that there is a trial and probation, throughout man's whole life—*but the*

trial is subservient to the education: he is tried that he may be educated, he is not educated that he may be tried." And to —— I would say, "Men are always under this purpose of education, and this purpose implies forgiveness of past sins; and thus *they are under the forgiveness of God, whether they know it or not.*" *He* interprets this into an affirmation, on your part, that men *were saved* whether they knew it or not; but the above was, and is your meaning, no doubt.

I would say that faith means a perfect assurance, that what ought to be, will be,—that God will certainly do that which is right, and that *right* is the best thing that can be done for me, and for every one else. A man who believes that *right* could *ever* possibly do him harm has no true faith. The man who believes that *right must always do him good,* has got hold of the secret of truth and peace—for he will also believe that God must always do right. This is the text of the prophecy of Habakkuk—one of the most precious books of the Bible—in my estimation. It is the eternal blessed *reality* of that technical conventionality in the English Constitution, that the king can do no wrong. The *real* King, the Eternal King, *can* do no wrong. He must do right, and right is the universal good—for you, for me, and all—for *bad and good.*

I should like now and then to have a word with you. The living voice is better than the touch of a pen; but these things are true, whether spoken or unspoken. They are rays of that eternal light, of which it is said, "Thy sun

shall no more go down, for the Lord shall be unto thee an everlasting light, and thy God, thy glory.

Ever truly yours,

T. ERSKINE.

DR. MANNING.

Linlathen, October 3, 1865.

MY DEAR BISHOP,—

I don't think Manning's idea of Revelation well thought out. The right conception of God and His relation to men seems indeed never to have been arrived at, except through the Jewish teaching; but when once apprehended, it commends itself to the moral reason as an intelligible and necessary truth, *i.e.*, if believed on its own ground, and not on that of external authority.

Dear —— used to say "*Read Jod*" (73rd and following verses of the 119th Psalm). "Thy hands have made me and fashioned me: O give me understanding that I may learn Thy commandments."

Yours affectionately,

T. ERSKINE.

"TRUTHS NOW NEEDED."

Linlathen, November 14, 1865.

VESCOVO CARISSIMO,—

I believe that a well-conducted periodical of the kind you speak of would no doubt be very valuable, though in

these days periodicals are very apt to fall into flippancy and spurious cleverness. —— speaks of a Mr. ——, a clergyman in the south of England, as one who might well fill the place of Editor, should such a project be carried out.

There are abundant treasures of old authorized truths which have been allowed to get almost obsolete, and which need to be revived, especially that inexhaustible truth, *the Love of God*—in its purpose and acting, its identity with righteousness, but which has been represented as its antagonist. The meaning of the justice of God has been confounded with the justice of a sheriff-substitute, which is, and must be, satisfied with the punishment of offenders; whereas the justice of God can never be satisfied with anything but with the righteousness and regeneration of the creature.

Ever truly yours,

T. ERSKINE.

THE DEAD.

Linlathen, November 24, 1865.

VESCOVO CARISSIMO,—

Where are you to seek protection against cold this winter? Palermo again, or some nearer place?

Dear —— was in his usual state this time last year, and millions besides, and not one of them all can give the smallest inkling of what they have passed through. It is

wonderful. Yet one is comforted by the assurance that what is right will certainly be done.

Yours affectionately,

T. ERSKINE.

As mentioned in the Introduction to these letters, there have been preserved other papers connected with Mr. Erskine—further letters, fragments of thoughts or essays by him, notes of his conversations by others, and some anecdotes illustrative of his life and character; should the letters, here published, be thought of use and of interest, and it seem good to enlarge their number, and to add to these what other matter remains, they will, D.V., either be given alone, or in some future and early numbers of the "Present-Day Papers."

ALEXANDER EWING, D.C.L.,
BISHOP OF ARGYLL AND THE ISLES
(IN THE S. E. CH.).

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[ii.]

PRESENT-DAY PAPERS ON PROMINENT QUESTIONS IN THEOLOGY.

GOD AND THE CHRISTIAN SACRAMENTS

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GOD AND THE CHRISTIAN SACRAMENTS.

"Around the throne heaven is opened, and the nature of eternal things displayed, all springing from the Divine Humanity. All beams from Him. He is the bread and the wine; He is the water of life. Accordingly, on each side of the opening heaven appears an apostle: that on the right represents Baptism, that on the left represents the Lord's Supper. All life consists of these two: throwing off error and knaves from our company continually, and receiving truth or wise men into our company continually. . . . Whenever any individual rejects error and embraces truth, a Last Judgment passes upon that individual."—*Blake's description of his picture of the Last Judgment.*

THE God idea—that is, the belief in and worship of superior invisible intelligence and power—is common, in various forms and stages of development, to all nations in every age of the world. Whether that idea originates in human instinct, or is communicated from without and transmitted by tradition, its universality proves its reality as an absolute necessity of humanity. The revelation of Deity is as much an answer to heartfelt want as sight to the eye, hearing to the ear, and social communion to human affection. It is just as truly beyond the power of any man or number of men to add a radically new idea, such as the idea of God, to the mind of the race, as it is to add a new member to the body. Neither

can such an idea be taken away. Exceptional atheism no more disproves the fact of the universality of belief in the Divine existence, than congenital or acquired blindness, deafness, or idiocy is evidence against the existence of visible objects, audible sounds, or the rational faculty. God *is* because human nature is so constituted that it believes in and seeks after Him. Man is as necessarily a religious being as he is a rational being. His belief in and aspirations after God increase with every degree of moral and intellectual progress; or rather, his mental growth is dependent on progressive knowledge of the divine nature and love of divine quality. In germinal and rudimentary notions of deity, such as fetichism and polytheism, God is apprehended as a being or beings to be feared and propitiated by gifts and sacrifices. His relation to the worshipper is as invisible power without benevolence. It is only in the higher development of revelation that God is realized as our Father, and as perfectly holy, just, and merciful.

But why, it may be asked, does God reveal Himself so unequally to His children in various ages and countries of the world? To this we can only answer, Such is the fact; a fact in accordance with the phenomena of all natural as well as spiritual growth. The knowledge of immortality reconciles us to the apparent partiality. No one complains that a babe is injured because he is not born into the full stature of physical and intellectual manhood. We know that he is born to become a man, and that the fact of his birth is the divine pledge that he shall attain true manhood in this life or in the next. The fetich worshipper may be in intellectual and spiritual life, compared with the advanced Christian, as the first cell-germ of the human embryo to the

new-born child; but being, through his capacity of worship, potentially human, he is as far above the most highly organized of the brute creation as that is above vegetative life. But what of those who live in the midst of the most advanced civilization, and partake of its culture, who can find no satisfactory evidence of Deity either in creation or revelation? Of many such it is surely not uncharitable to say that they hide themselves from the knowledge of God because the divine character condemns their own. There is a real atheism, and an atheism that is merely apparent. The former is the only atheism recognised in the Scriptures. It proceeds from corrupt affections, and is proof against all possible argument, because its seat is not in the understanding, but in the heart. Speculative atheism, where the will is not utterly depraved, is the denial, not of God, but merely of a distorted image of God. It is a strong protest against prevailing idolatry. No doubt such a state of mind implies defect in the intellectual or moral nature; for, happily, in a Christian country, men, whether learned or ignorant, are able, more or less consciously to themselves, to separate so much of the fictitious character of God as represented by others, from the real as revealed through His Word by His Spirit within themselves, as to know Him to be worthy of their highest reverence and love. But we may not upbraid any man who claims to have conscientiously sought after a God worthy of worship, and yet has not found Him. We may not deny the force of his difficulty, that equally in nature as in the Scriptures an enemy has been permitted to sow tares amongst the good wheat; a fact which seems contrary to those attributes of infinite love and omnipotence without which we feel there

could be no God. We may not be able to give him a satisfactory solution of the difficulty, nor is it necessary that we should. God Himself is to be found by all who seek after Him; and He is His own interpreter.

It is true that the visible creation manifests the invisible Creator; but to whom? Not to irrational animals, or to men of corrupt minds. Here, as everywhere, it is only the pure in heart that can see God. In requiring certain conditions of the seeker after God, we ask only what is demanded at the threshold of every department of scientific knowledge. God, we claim, is Spirit, and must be sought for according to spiritual conditions. If, at the outset, the inquirer demurs to the term spiritual, it matters not; he believes in the existence of qualities which we regard as spiritual. He believes in love, in truth, and in self-sacrifice for the good of others; and, so far as he truly believes in such qualities, he believes in God. Whether there is or is not a Being in whom such qualities have their essential existence, and from whom they flow, he will admit that they are worthy of universal reverence and cultivation. Let him, then, seek after the fullest embodiment and manifestation of such qualities as an object of love, and an example for imitation; for it is only through the love of divine quality in human manifestation that he can attain to a true knowledge of the source of all quality. "If a man love not his brother, whom he hath seen, how can he love God, whom he hath not seen?" Suppose we could convince the most obstinate sceptic of the divine existence, he would not thereby be brought one step nearer to God than before, unless he could see and love God for what He is; but if, through some measure of the divine nature in himself, he

discerns and loves that nature in his brother, he has begun to see and to love the Father. God is love; and whatever we attribute to Him must be in perfect harmony with His essential nature, or we justify atheism by setting up an image of God which misrepresents Him to His children. If we attribute wrath and vengeance to Him, as the Scriptures warrant us in doing, we must not forget that it is divine wrath and divine vengeance—the wrath and vengeance not of hate, but of love—which, in the severest penalty for sin, seeks the highest well-being of the sufferer.

The theist in a Christian country who believes in a Supreme Being, the Creator and Preserver of all existence, but who regards all written revelation as unworthy of Him, is, nevertheless, indebted to such revelation for all the knowledge he possesses concerning God. He has merely, unconsciously to himself, modified what he has learned, directly or indirectly, of deity from the Scriptures. Where there is no written record of divine communication, the knowledge of God remains in the region of superstition; for the science of theology as much depends on transmitted knowledge as any other science. Whatever makes manifest is light, whether the medium is the sun or a candle. So whatever reveals anything of God to man is divine light, whatever may be its relative imperfections. Its imperfections are as needful, and thus as providentially divine, as the clouds of our atmosphere are needed to attemper the light and heat of the sun. Every objection to a written revelation may be comprehended in this, that our heavenly Father would not have revealed Himself to His children in a manner so intensely human as is represented of Him in the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures; that He would not have condescended

to the weakness, the ignorance, and even to the sinfulness of His creatures, in order to lead them, by gradual steps, to the perfect righteousness and stature of true manhood. But if intercourse between the divine and human natures, between God and man, is possible—and who shall dare affirm that the All-Father cannot communicate with His children?—such communion must be on common ground. The thought of God's heart is divine, but how can it be apprehended by men unless expressed in human language and by natural symbols? The Divine Word, to be apprehended, must be made flesh, and dwell among us; and this is claimed to have been, in part at least, realized in every sacred historian, poet, and prophet, before the advent of the perfect man; and though even in its outward expression much of its native brightness is discernible, it necessarily partakes of the failings of the people through whom and to whom it came. But the eternal principles that underlie the external form are suitable to all ages and to every people.

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divine command to dedicate his son to God no otherwise than as a command to slay, we who know what is implied by a divine offering—a living sacrifice—need not be offended by the letter which proved the patriarch's faith and gave him a better knowledge of God. On all the glory of revelation, as of nature, there is a covering. The chaff is not the wheat, but it is the divinely appropriate vesture of the wheat, good in its kind and for its use, though not suitable for human nourishment. Venomous reptiles and noxious plants are texts in nature which, taken apart from their context, seem worthy creations rather of partial malevolence than of infinite benevolence. The evidence of such benevolence is, however, so cumulative, that we can acknowledge all apparent exceptions as forming parts of one harmonious creation of love. Each is the partial utterance of a divine thought in a world which to us is not complete, but in process of creation; not redeemed in its outward manifestation, but in process of redemption. In relation to the divine nature, all revelation, whether of the natural or of the spiritual world, must be imperfect. God dwells in light inaccessible, and the atmosphere through which the light is refracted belongs to earth. As the veil is not the light, but the medium of its manifestation; so the letter of revelation is not the spirit, though it is the necessary clothing of the spirit. Whatever error or imperfection may be found or imagined in the letter of what claims to be divine revelation, and approves its claim by its general acceptance through many ages and among various races of people in different degrees of civilization, is no more evidence against its heavenly origin than weakness or malformation in the body of a good man is proof that he could not have come

from a perfect creator. All organic substances that minister to physical life are divine in every part, being plenarily inspired of God in the natural degree of life, and profitable for sustenance and growth; yet we are not acting against, but working with that spirit, whose life fills them, in criticizing or discriminating between what is and what is not suitable for our special wants. In wholly changing, through the process of digestion and assimilation, the form of the substance, we do not destroy but fulfil the purpose of its creation. It is transformed into a higher degree of life. So the word of God has free course, and is glorified, when translated into the higher realm of human thought and action; while in every case the grain, the fruit, and the word retain for the body and the mind of humanity the natural form in its integrity, that each may divide, discriminate, and digest for his special need.

Every human event, as well as every object in nature, has a divine significance in itself, and in its relation to universal being. Jewish history cannot be more sacred in its nature than English history, but God has made the former sacramental by specially revealing in the record His protecting and controlling power over one nation, and that one of the lowest and weakest of nations, that we may learn to observe His direct care over all people in every age. The Song called Solomon's may have been meant by the writer merely as a genuine expression of ardent human affection; but being that, it not only may, but must, to those who realize the fact that divine and human love have the same origin, and consequently the same essential character, be a true though imperfect expression of the reciprocal love and union of the divine and the human nature—of Christ and His Church—

and is thus a sacramental poem. It has proved so to very many from the dawn of Christianity downwards, and thus vindicates its place in the canon of Scripture. If others do not find in it such blessing, it at least has done them no harm. The same argument, it may be said, applies to every love-song, ancient or modern. No doubt, if men were pure of heart, every genuine expression of human love would be found to be an inspiration from, and manifestation of, divine love; and, in reality, true human love purifies from evil, and makes us thus more receptive of the heavenly life. It is a sacrament which promotes heavenly as well as earthly union; but in the incipient stages of the world's redemption, special preparation and the concurrence of special circumstances are required to enable us to raise our mind and affections heavenwards. Holy ground is everywhere, for the earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof; but that we may eventually feel this, it is needful to be pointed out to us first as specially somewhere, that, our shoes being put off, our feelings may be brought into sympathy with nature's holiness. The seventh or the first day of the week is not in itself more sacred than any other, but it is the divinely-appointed sacrament of time, which connects it with eternity. That is the "Lord's Day" in which we are in the Spirit, and cease to do our own works that we may enter into His restful activity; and whoever fully realizes this fact will be careful neither by word nor act to cause his brother to stumble by removing the means through which he himself attained to such knowledge. Every act of washing, whether of the body or of its covering, is essentially holy, as was impressed on the Israelite by its being made a part of his religion. It is the divinely-appointed means of bodily purification.

Every meal is sacred, as a gift of the Creator received by the creature. All life consists of purification from evil, and assimilation of divine life, whether in the natural or the spiritual degree. The point of connection between the natural and the spiritual is the sacramental aspect of the act. In the ordinances of Baptism and the Eucharist, the natural symbols are raised to the Mount of Transfiguration with Him who instituted them and set forth their spiritual significance; and when, as sacred rites, we celebrate them in His name, they form steps which cannot, in this stage of existence, be dispensed with in the ladder between heaven and earth.

What matter is to spirit, what the body is to the soul, what the visible Humanity of Christ is to the invisible Divinity, such are the Sacraments to the written Word—they bring it forth to the view of the most unlearned. Whoever understands rightly the ordinances of Baptism and the Holy Supper understands the Gospel. They are the pillars of Christian doctrine. No society is entitled to the name of a Church whose members deny themselves the privileges of Christ's ordinances. We gladly and thankfully admit the vital Christianity of members of the Society of Friends, and so far as they have brought and continue to bring forth the fruits of the Spirit in a self-denying and benevolent life, they have the witness of the One Spirit, the giver of life; but there can be no lack of charity in our not giving—what they have never claimed, and have no wish to receive—the name of a Church of Christ. They are not a Church of united brethren, they are a "Society of Friends." It may be that their friendliness, even to others outside of their Society, is frequently better than the brotherliness of members of a professedly Christian community; nevertheless,

brotherliness is a reality, and even the very name is a sure word of prophecy, to the fulfilment of which God has set His seal. The Friends claim that in the spiritual signification of the Sacraments lies their power. No doubt it is to the higher meaning that the outward observance points and guides, but the outward observance is as real in its degree as bodily washing is real, as outward eating and drinking are real and needful for the support of natural life. It becometh us, even should we ever be able to say we need not attend to the outward rite for ourselves, for the sake of our brethren, to fulfil *all* righteousness. It cannot be alleged that the observance of the Sacraments as divinely-appointed means of grace tends to weaken the spiritual life of the faithful receiver, and if not, surely brotherly kindness claims compliance with what cannot be sinful, and may be helpful: Christ has, both in word and deed, revealed that concession, where not opposed to the will of God, may be as divine as martyrdom. "Whosoever," He says, "shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain;" and when a tax in aid of the temple service was demanded of Him, He, though not acknowledging the obligation, and not having money to pay it, did that which He would not do to satisfy His own hunger—wrought a miracle, and for what principle? Merely, as some would say, for the principle of concession, lest He should offend the tribute-gatherers.

To all non-observance of religious duty, however external, is attached the penalty of defective life. The Sacraments set forth the essential doctrines of Christianity in a concrete form; and whether the neglect of them arises, as among the Friends, from conscientious though mistaken motives, or through mere indifference, as is the case with many pro-

fessing Christians, the result, sooner or later, is the same. Doctrinal strength, the bone and sinew of religion, decays. The Quakers do not read the Scriptures at their meetings, and they have no form or system of doctrinal truth. Most of them tacitly accept, and frame their language according to, what is known as evangelical doctrine, and this causes unavailing regret to others, who regard such orthodoxy as incompatible with the teaching of the founders of their society. Thus, as an association, they are indebted for systematic truth to those who maintain those outward ordinances which they contemn; not to dwell on the fact, deplored by themselves, that they are declining in influence and numerical strength. They have been faithful witnesses to a few things, not the least of which is their testimony to the indwelling light and power of the Holy Spirit in the believer.

As the poet says of the "flower in the crannied wall," if we could arrive at the full meaning of the Sacraments we should know what God is, and what man is, and the relation that exists and is to be realized of the one to the other. To this knowledge we shall come more readily through these ordinances than through any word of God in visible nature. Yea, the visible things of God in creation shall, through the Christian Revelation, be more fully understood, for Christ is the true light that enlighteneth every thing, as well as every man, that cometh into the world. The astronomer, the chemist, or the botanist may not be a theologian, any more than the latter may be a man of science, because all members have not the same office; but where the Spirit of the Lord is there is liberty, there is light of all kinds and in every degree. Humanity in all worlds is one: no man,

however selfish, has the power of exclusively appropriating the smallest gift of heaven to himself. The mere philosopher receives reflected light and life through the higher knowledge and worship, by the Christian, of Him who is the Light of the world; and the theologian reaps the benefits of scientific discovery. True science as naturally accompanies a right knowledge and worship of God as external creation is revealed by sunlight. He who worships not God is, nevertheless, blessed through the religion of his neighbour. Even he who in a civilized country believes not in the existence of God owes to the faith of others the very ability to avow, with some semblance of reason, his unbelief. The Church of Christ stands in a priestly relationship to the world; it daily offers up living sacrifices for the sins of others as well as for its own, and receives gifts for men, "yea, even for the ungodly, that the Lord God may dwell among them." No man either liveth or dieth to himself. If one is raised above another in Christian knowledge and life, it is not because of any prior merit in himself, for what has he that he has not received? but that he may reach down helping hands to his apparently less favoured brother; for this is the true end of God's electing grace—that, as St. Paul says, "through your mercy they also may obtain mercy."

The Gospel is comprised in the announcement that "the kingdom of heaven is at hand." This is "glad tidings of great joy to all people;" for, as we have said, every man is more or less blessed in the blessing of his neighbour, whether he knows it or not. It is especially good news to those who understand the import of the message. For what is the kingdom of heaven but the absolute rule of righteous-

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of the same Apostle (1 Cor. vii. 14): "The unbelieving husband is sanctified by or in (ἐν) the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified in the husband, else were your children unclean; but *now* are they holy." Here the Apostle appeals to what would be admitted by the Christian parent—that the children of such a marriage were not ritually unclean, but holy. He appeals from what was evident, the acceptance of the children because of the faith of the believing parent, to what was doubtful, a kind of imputed sanctity attaching to the unbelieving parent. But where was the evidence of the acceptance of the children as holy, if they could not be regarded as fit subjects of the initiatory rite of the Church? On the supposition of their having been baptized into the name of the Trinity, there is a meaning in saying they are holy, or dedicated to the Lord, and in the exhortation to train them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, which is not otherwise apparent. No doubt there is in every child, whether born of Christian or of heathen parents, the holy image of Christ, which makes that child what St. Paul said the Athenians were—the offspring of God; but here reference is made by the Apostle to the fact of a special sanctity or consecration. He was too good a reasoner to appeal in confirmation of a doubtful fact to another equally doubtful. If the practice of infant baptism is an innovation from apostolic practice, history is silent as to the time of its introduction into the Church.

As regards the mode of administration, the critical Baptist has, no doubt, the best of the argument with any man who makes that a ground of contention. No doubt the word means to immerse, and equally doubtless that was the mode of administration in the early Church, as it is the mode

enjoined in the Church of England. Immersion of the whole body in water is also a better type of complete spiritual cleansing than sprinkling or affusion. All such considerations may be frankly admitted. But ordinances were made for man, not man for ordinances. Simple immersion of the whole body in water is no more a washing in any true sense, than a small piece of bread and a few drops of wine are a supper to the hungry; yet the Baptist conforms to the ordinary mode of administering the one sacrament, and makes a conscience of the other. But if spiritual communion can be as fully represented by a little bread and wine as by a full meal, spiritual cleansing may be sensibly set forth by sprinkling, affusion, or immersion, as may be most satisfactory to the recipient or the Church. Undoubtedly, whatsoever is not of faith is sin; and if conscience is made of what may appear to others not worthy of it, the conscientiousness itself is worthy of respect. Nevertheless, he who inclines to separate from his brethren for such a cause, should consider whether schism may not be the greater evil. The genius of Christianity, as a living, internal religion, is totally adverse to scrupulosity in modes of worship and ritual; and the society which attaches too great importance to such modes tends to become divided against itself, for reasons similar to what caused the original schism.

Baptism—the administration of which virtually says to every candidate, "Let him that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity"—is the entrance-gate of the kingdom of heaven. The Lord's Supper, in its fulness, is heaven itself in a more comprehensive sense than the heart of man can conceive. Christ has revealed as much of the nature and meaning of the ordinance as language can express, and

He has given His Spirit to lead the obedient disciple into all truth concerning it as he is able to receive. It is only where a truth is apprehended by the whole man, by his intellectual and affectional nature, that it is truly possessed. He has not yet heard the Gospel, and incurs no guilt in rejecting it, to whom, through defective preparation in himself, or through the presentation of it in a false light by others, it has not come as glad tidings. No doubt it is good that the Scriptures should be accepted in their entirety as containing the revealed will of God, as a man accepts an estate abounding in hidden mineral treasures, which require diligent search to discover. There are many statements in the Scriptures the meaning of which the wisest Christian can see in part only; but they are given to be understood, and his edification through such statements can only be according to his understanding of them. If the student is humble and reverent he will neither rashly come to the conclusion that they are insoluble mysteries, nor attempt to reduce them, by forced explanations, to the level of his imperfect intelligence:—

> "Where I cannot set my faith,
> Unknowing, or unwise,
> I say, 'If this be what He saith,
> Here hidden treasure lies.'"

It is good to know that we have in the Scriptures a field in which goodly treasure lies hid, but unless we cultivate that field, and search out its treasure, our possession of it is not more real than the miser's ownership of what he fancies are his riches. "I have many things to say to you," said Christ to His disciples, "but ye cannot bear them now." Because they were as yet incapable of understanding many

truths known to Him, He reserves the communication until growing intelligence should make such truths acceptable. Yet some truths were so important that He must announce them, whether the disciples understood their meaning or not. The words respecting the eating of His flesh and drinking of His blood were so mysterious to the disciples, so apparently opposed to common sense, that many of them left their Master because He uttered them. Others remained, not because they understood, but because they had more humility in themselves and more faith in their Lord's wisdom; they believed that His words were indeed words of eternal life, whether they could understand them or not. Both those that departed and the disciples that remained knew that, however mysterious and apparently incongruous the words might seem, the speaker of them meant what He said. No one ever thought then of giving them a tropical meaning. So in the institution of the Eucharist, neither the Apostles nor the earliest of the Fathers question that the mysterious words applied to the bread, "This is my body," had a real meaning. Our Lord did not reserve this ordinance among the many things which His disciples could not bear, because it is a visible medium through which blessing is conveyed to the worthy receiver, whatever view he may hold as to its meaning. Under its very lowest aspect—Transubstantiation, as held by the Romish Church, in which the spiritual idea is degraded to the level of the sensuous, instead of the sensuous being elevated to the spiritual—the sincere worshipper is brought under favourable circumstances into association with the divine fact that Christ not only gave, but continually gives, Himself for the life of the world, and that the Christian life must be sustained by a continuous

reception and assimilation of Christ's life. No need to endeavour to destroy the faith of a sincere worshipper in the "Real Presence," for there *is* a real presence somewhere to every worshipper of Christ, and if he can only find it in bread, it may be better he should find it there than nowhere. We have, however, a right to demand such an evidence from the Roman Catholic recipient that Christ was really present in the sacrament to him, as he ought to be able to give. We would say to him, "You profess to have received in the sacrament the very body and blood of the Lord; we shall not question that fact—nay, we cannot question it, if you clearly show in your life that you are a partaker of the divine nature. If you do not, then you are not merely no better, but you have in a greater or less degree profaned the sacrament—you have eaten condemnation, not discerning the Lord's Body. If you continue to lead an evil life, you are such a disciple only as Judas was. You have betrayed the Master; for it is a noteworthy fact, taken in connection with the consequences St. Paul says follows unworthy reception, that on its first celebration the Lord's Supper appears to have brought out in fuller display the evil character of one Apostle, and the latent weakness of the others. After the sop Satan entered into Judas, and all the disciples left the Master in His greatest extremity. Subsequently, the divine life asserted its power: in Judas by causing unendurable remorse, in the others by inducing a true repentance."

A safe criterion of the truth of any religious doctrine is its comprehensiveness; for whatever is divine must be universal, since it proceeds from the Infinite. It may not be untrue to affirm of the red or of the blue ray that it is

light, but the assertion is imperfectly true. The white ray is most truly light, because it includes all others. So there is some ray of truth, something of the divine light, in every form of religion in the world; but the Christian religion manifests the fulness of its divinity by including all that is good and true in every religion. So it is with any doctrine of Christianity: the test of the amount and quality of truth in it is not its exclusiveness, but its inclusiveness. No false doctrine could get an abiding hold on the minds of any considerable number of men except for the amount of truth, somewhat distorted and mixed it may be, which gives vitality and endurance to it. However absurd the Romish or the Lutheran doctrine of the Real Presence in the sacrament may be, it will remain and captivate many sincere minds until its real meaning is acknowledged. No kind of reasoning, no persistency of appeal to common sense, will avail in convincing many faithful inquirers that Christ meant something different from what He said. They may be silenced and driven into the bosom of a Church which gives relief from the perplexity of reason by condemning the exercise of it in religious investigations. We can give such minds satisfaction only by admitting as full a sense to the Lord's words as they will legitimately bear. Where this cannot be done, it is better to confess our inability than to make our ignorance the standard of divine wisdom. When Calvin said, "I am not ashamed to confess that the mystery is greater than my thoughts can grasp or my words set forth, and must be rather experienced than understood;" and Zwingle, "Christ is to be eaten, but in a wonderful manner, which the believer should not be too anxious to scrutinize," it may be they were wiser in their humility than when they endea-

voured to embody in Church creeds their understanding of the words.

In each of the three Evangelists who give detailed accounts of the institution of the Supper, the words, "This is my body," are recorded as having been spoken by Christ on that occasion. In the First Epistle to the Corinthians St. Paul says that he received the record of the institution, which he there gives, "from the Lord Jesus;" a statement which, taken in connection with Galatians i. 12, must mean that he received the words by direct revelation from the risen Saviour. Thus we have the same words thrice recorded as having been spoken by the Lord before His crucifixion, and once after His ascension. The fact that He spoke those words is unquestionable. It may as safely be affirmed that no other mode of expression could give so fully the meaning intended to be conveyed, not at that time merely, but to the Church in future ages. Both the Syriac, in which He is supposed to have spoken, and the Greek languages were copious enough to have expressed a mere symbolic or figurative representation of the bread to Christ, if such was His meaning. Indeed, language expressing resemblance or likeness was frequently used by Him in the parables.

We may not be able to attain to the fulness of meaning contained in many of the Lord's sayings; but we may arrive at interpretations which shall be true to the letter, and contain much of its spirit and life. We must, however, do no violence to the letter by forcing its plain words to mean something different, something that excludes the plain meaning; for a higher or more spiritual meaning will always include or fulfil the literal meaning. The Roman Catholic makes the eucharistic words mean not only that our Lord

then and there wrought a miracle of which there was no visible evidence, but that He virtually gave power to His Apostles and to priests in future ages to work the same miracle. The Lutheran doctrine does not essentially differ from this; while the majority of Protestant Churches teach that Christ meant that the bread and wine of the sacrament are merely symbols of His body and blood. These views cannot all be true; yet each may retain some portion of truth in which the others are deficient. There is, for example, a very obvious natural and spiritual truth in transubstantiation, in that bread and wine, partaken of under any circumstances, become truly transubstantiated into the body and blood of the receiver. Now, St. Paul expressly teaches that even the natural body of the Christian is, in a very real sense, the temple of the Holy Ghost; and that Christ dwells in every believer, and in a fuller degree in the Christian Church, "which is His body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all." The babe at the mother's breast verily receives of her body and blood in a form best suited to its nourishment, and this becomes transubstantiated into its body. In short, there is a visible transubstantiation in nature, which cannot take place, however, until the food is assimilated by the receiver.

The bread and wine are also symbolical, though not merely symbolical, of a more heavenly food — even of spiritual meat and drink—"The true bread that cometh down from heaven, and the new wine of the kingdom." The symbol is as real an expression of a higher truth as the body is of the soul. For our Lord to have said, "My body shall be likened to this bread," or, "This bread represents my body," would have been for Him to express a partial

truth only, not the truth as He saw it. He could not give partial expression to a truth which He saw clearly. Never man spake like this Man, because never man saw and felt as this Man. We dare not presume to measure the extent of His vision, and the expression of it by the limitations of ours. Rather let us rejoice in the truth that through His life in us we may become so united to Him as to see all things in His light. We cannot separate the words from the speaker; and if we can realize what He is, this expression of His knowledge may become clearer. He claims to be one with the Father in such absolute union that all power in heaven and earth are His; and if all power, all knowledge also belongs to Him. It is quite impertinent to ask whether Christ knew science as we now know it, because our highest attainments in philosophy are as the knowledge merely of a few letters of the alphabet in comparison with a perfect knowledge even of one department of philosophy. Christ knew what heaven is, and what the earth is. He had all power in both realms. What physician can make all manner of disease depart by a touch, a word, or a look, and raise the dead by a command? What philosopher can change water into wine, multiply bread, and make the winds and waves obey him? He had absolute power over nature, because He is the life of nature. He knew what bread essentially is, and we do not; we only know some of its qualities and uses. When the God-Man says of bread, "This is my body," shall we reply, "Nay, Lord, thou canst not mean that; thou must mean something different?" Rather let us accept His words as the revelation of a truth perfect in the lower as in the higher kingdom. His words do not and cannot imply that He made the bread or the wine different from what it was

before; if bread, then, was in any sense His body, it was before, and is now, such. He merely revealed the fact, not then known, and not now understood. What is this visible creation in all its forms and modes of being, from the sand on the sea-shore up to humanity? Is it not a Word—a Revelation from God and of God, the embodiment of divine thought, which we but partially and dimly apprehend? True, it appears to our half-opened vision as a dead mass of matter, out of which, however, organic life proceeds and is sustained. Is God, then, the God of the dead? Can anything that is dead proceed from Him who is essential life? Yea, can anything—even a thought—come from Him that is not of Him, of His very substance? "For of Him and through Him and to Him are all things," said an Apostle who saw more clearly the relation of creation to God than do many of our philosophers, but who yet could not see so clearly as his Master did. Ask of Him, What is living bread, the true bread of heaven? and He answers, "I am living bread, I am the true bread which cometh down from heaven. My flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh and drink the blood of the Son of Man, ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him." Do we ask, What is earthly bread? The answer is—not, "I am earthly bread," but—"This bread is my body, given for you"—for your body's sustenance—"as my life is given for the sustenance and growth of your spiritual body." As is the spiritual, so is the natural in its degree. The invisible things of God are understood

by the visible. If the spirit of man can be sustained and grow only by a real incorporation of the divine life—the spiritual substance of Christ; so even the natural man lives on divine substance, though in an external and changeable realm of being. Surely God is greater than all the suns, moons, and stars in the universe; but He must be the life of each and all of them—or rather, may we not say they are expressions of His life, visible symbols of His wisdom, seen by us, not as they are in themselves, but as they are in relation to our state of separation from the Father? Not the sun merely, but every individual grain of wheat is a continent of the divine life, one in Him; but apparently divided or broken in accommodation to the rudimentary stage of human progress. Why should it offend us to think that God feeds even our perishable bodies with divine substance in a form adapted to their requirements? If bread is in no sense divine substance, what is it? and how does it become flesh and blood, if it was not potentially so before? But, it may be objected, is not this Pantheism? No, we reply, certainly not. Pantheism either makes nature God, or it knows of no God except as a diffused impersonal life throughout the universe. In either case, Pantheism is merely Atheism under a new name. Out of humanity, of which the Man Christ Jesus is the perfect manifestation, it is impossible to realize God. Whosoever sees Him, sees the Father; for "in Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." External nature is a more outward and less expressive manifestation of Christ than is that body which Thomas was invited to touch. Any man is greater in his essential being than the world on which he lives. But, out of harmony with nature, material forces, and even the beasts

of the field, obtain a mastery over him, because they are more obedient to the inferior life than he is to the higher law of his being.

Christ knew more of what we term "matter" than the wisest philosopher yet knows; but any philosopher, worthy of the name, ought to know that it can have no existence apart from the Divine Mind. There cannot be two independent substances in the universe, any more than there can be two gods. If, as some, not philosophers, but theologians, teach, "God made all things out of nothing," then nothing must have been a substance. Certainly no such absurdity can be laid to the charge of any writer of the Scriptures from Genesis to Revelation, inclusive of even the apocryphal books. Any view of the visible universe that separates it from Him who revealed Himself to Moses as the "I AM" is fruitful of contradictions. Christ, in one case at least, accommodated His perception of the truth to the understandings of the disciples. Where all others saw death, He saw life. "The maid is not dead, but sleepeth." "Our friend Lazarus sleepeth, but I go to awake him out of his sleep." In this case He translated the real into the apparent—"Lazarus is dead." The disciples, He knew, would soon discover for themselves that this shadow of death is not the real death. In the institution of the Supper He could not make such accommodation to their understanding, for then there would have been no revelation of the reality. If He had said, this bread represents, or is symbolical of my body, it would have prevented much controversy, but it would have been a very imperfect expression of truth. Happily, no religious community has dared to change the words in accommodation to its own under-

standing of them, but by comments they are made to mean what they do not express.

"God is Spirit," and surely nothing can come from Him that is not spiritual; which is merely to say, nothing can proceed from Him that is not in Him, or according to His essential being. Matter, then, must be spiritual or divine substance seen by us as dead, because of the deadness in us during our state of conscious separation from the Fountain of Life. "What do I know of matter?" says Dr. J. H. Newman in his "Apologia pro Vita Sua;" "just as much as the wisest philosopher, and that is—nothing." Speaking of his earlier life, however, he says:—"The broad philosophy of Clement and Origen carried me away; the philosophy, not the theological doctrine; and I have drawn out some features of it in my volume, with the zeal and freshness, but with the partiality of a neophyte. Some portions of their teaching, magnificent in themselves, came like music to my inward ear, as if the response to ideas which, with little external to encourage them, I have cherished so long. These were based on the mystical or sacramental principle, and spoke of the various Economies or Dispensations of the Eternal. I understood them to mean that the exterior world, physical and historical, was but the outward manifestation of realities greater than itself. Nature was a parable; Scripture was an allegory; Pagan literature, philosophy, and mythology, properly understood, were but a preparation for the Gospel. The Greek poets and sages were in a certain sense prophets; for

'Thoughts beyond their thought, to those high bards were given.'

There had been a Divine Dispensation granted to the Jews;

there had been in some sense a dispensation carried on in favour of the Gentiles. He who had taken the seed of Jacob for His elect people, had not therefore cast the rest of mankind out of His sight. In the fulness of time both Judaism and Paganism had come to nought; the outward framework which concealed yet suggested the living truth had never been intended to last, and it was dissolving under the beams of the Sun of Justice behind it and through it. The process of change had been slow; it had been done, not rashly, but by rule and measure—'At sundry times, and in divers manners'—first one disclosure and then another, till the whole was brought into full manifestation. And thus room was made for the anticipation of further and deeper disclosures of truths still under the veil of the letter, and in their season to be revealed. The visible world still remains without its divine interpretation: Holy Church, in her sacraments and her hierarchical appointments, will remain even to the end of the world only a symbol of those heavenly facts which fill eternity. Her mysteries are but the expression in human language of truths to which the human mind is unequal.

"I suppose it was to the Alexandrian school and to the early Church that I owe in particular what I definitely held about the angels. I viewed them not only as the ministers employed by the Creator in the Jewish and Christian dispensations, as we find on the face of Scripture, but as carrying on, as Scripture also implies, the economy of the visible world. I considered them as the causes of motion, light, and life, and of those elementary principles of the physical universe, which, when offered in their developments to our senses, suggest to us the notion of cause and

effect, and of what are called the laws of nature. I have drawn out this doctrine in my sermon for Michaelmas-day, written not later than 1834. I say of the angels, 'Every breath of air and ray of light and heat, every beautiful prospect is, as it were, the skirts of their garments, the waving of the robes of those whose faces see God. What would be the thoughts of a man who, when examining a flower, or a herb, or a pebble, or a ray of light, which he treats as something so much beneath him in the scale of existence, suddenly discovered that he was in the presence of some powerful being who was hidden behind the visible things he was inspecting; who, though concealing his wise hand, was giving them their beauty, grace, and perfection, as being God's instruments for the purpose; nay, whose robe and ornament those objects were, which he was so eager to analyze? Well may we say with the three holy children—'O all ye works of the Lord, bless ye the Lord, praise Him, and magnify Him for ever.'"

When God revealed Himself to Moses in Horeb as the "I AM"—the All of Being, the manifestation was of a Divine Life in Nature, a bush burning, but not consumed. What but the childish intellect can suppose that, although Moses saw this life of God in one bush only, it does not exist in every tree and plant that grows, or that the ground on which the Hebrew lawgiver then stood had, in itself, a sanctity beyond that of any spot on earth? Every spot in which a man can find God is holy ground; and "every bush a-fire with God," if our eyes were only opened to see it, as the eyes of the Prophet's servant were opened to see what existed before, chariots of fire and horses of fire encompassing his master.

It may be admitted that some of the force of the argument against the Romish doctrine of the Mass may be applied to the view now advocated. But when put into plain language, it merely means that the highest reason must be subservient to the lowest sensuous perception—that matter is, and must be, as dead or inert as it appears to the senses; forgetting that no material science even can be taught without educating the senses to submit to the higher light of reason, even when it affirms the contrary of what seems evident to the eyesight. The senses affirm that the stars are spots of light, the sun and moon discs, and that the earth is flat and stands still, while the visible heavens move round it; enlightened reason affirms the real truth to be contrary to all these perceptions. Though a doctrine may be, and the more spiritual it is must be, opposed to sensuous reasoning, it need not and ought not to be opposed to the enlightened understanding. To such sayings of Christ, urged as examples of His use of figurative language, as "I am the Door," "I am the Way," "I am the True Vine," all that can be said is that the speaker is most emphatically all these in their highest degree. Some urge, such a theologian as Professor Moses Stuart among them, How could our Lord mean the bread when He said, "This is my body broken for you," before the Crucifixion had taken place, and thus before His body had been broken? It so happens that the word broken is not said by any of the Evangelists to have been used by Christ. It is found according to the Authorized Version in St. Paul's testimony; but, as the Tauchnitz edition of Tischendorf's Testament shows, it is not in either of the three oldest Greek manuscripts of the New Testament. No doubt there is a sense

in which the Lord's body may be said to be broken in relation to us, but not to Him. "A bone of Him shall not be broken." It is the outer clothing that is meant, not the inner vesture. Among all visible schisms of His Body, the Church, there is a real though invisible unity. It is not without significance, as an example of the outward ritual taking form from the doctrine, that the Roman Catholic Church, which insists on external unity as essential to salvation, gives the bread entire, contrary to the primitive custom of breaking the loaf, and that the wine is denied to the laity, as it is denied to them to drink and judge for themselves of the truth as it is in Jesus; while the Protestant Churches, recognising an essential unity in diversity—Christ in all apparent divisions of His Body, the Church—and granting equal freedom of research to clergy and laity, break the bread, and give the cup to the people.

Having thus endeavoured to point out a literal meaning in the Lord's words at the institution of the Eucharist, let us consider what relation they bear to the "spirit and life" which every saying of His contains; that fuller meaning which is in some way acknowledged in all Churches.

"Labour not for the meat that perisheth, but for that which endureth to everlasting life." "I am the true bread that cometh down from heaven; your fathers did eat manna and are dead: whosoever eateth of this bread shall live for ever." "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh and drink the blood of the Son of Man, ye have no life in you." "The flesh profiteth nothing, it is the Spirit that quickeneth; the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life." In all such sayings the natural type, or the literal meaning, is not put away or denied as of no value,

but as comparatively of no value to the spiritual—it has no glory by reason of the glory that excelleth. The natural body is real; it is, or ought to be, a temple of the Holy Spirit. Natural food and drink really sustain this body, and they are replete with the divine life in the natural degree of being. But earthly bread merely sustains the body that perisheth. Earth is the footstool of God, but heaven is His throne. That is first which is natural, and by it we reach upward to the spiritual. Without the outward base of water baptism, we should not so well apprehend the necessity of regeneration. Without the Eucharist, we could not so fully learn the meaning of the Incarnation of Christ, its relation to us, and the nature of heavenly union and communion. There is also a meeting-place between the spiritual and the natural. When earnest, faithful disciples, of one heart and mind, meet together in worship, their minds and hearts are opened more fully for the reception of divine blessing. More especially is such blessing realized in the Eucharist; for there we have the self-sacrificing love of the Saviour manifested in fact. Christ has been made known in His glory to many besides His first disciples in "the breaking of bread." There is, so to speak, under such conditions a divine magnetism, which flows out from the heaven within man, and quickens all the faculties of the soul, transfiguring the most familiar objects with divine light. There is also an act of judgment against what in the receiver is not in harmony with the divine life. We may eat and drink condemnation as well as life. "For this cause," says St. Paul, speaking of a careless, undiscerning participation of the sacrament, "many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep." "Let a man examine himself, and *so* let him

eat of that bread and drink of that cup." "For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged." A faithful self-examination, a putting away of the old leaven, is an essential preparation for worthy communion. The Apostle is, however, careful to add that the judgment or condemnation is only a form of divine blessing, such a form as best agrees with the need of him who is the subject of it. "When we are judged we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world."

However difficult it may be for us, subject as we are to the conditions of space and time, and to the delusions of the senses, to understand the literal truth of the Lord's words, and however helpful it may be to many to apprehend their truth in that degree, it is not essential to a worthy partaking of the Lord's Supper, any more than a knowledge of the physiology of assimilation is needful to the nourishment of the body. The spiritual truth may be rendered clearer by a knowledge of the literal truth, but it is not dependent on such knowledge. Every sincere communicant eats and drinks of the one bread and cup with his brethren in remembrance of Christ, a recalling of His presence as a life-giving Spirit, though He is not far from any one of us, and has never left us; but there is a sad as well as blessed significance in the sacrament. It means that we have left Him, and need to recall His presence as if He were absent; to show forth His death as essential to our life. He is nearer to every one of us than we are to each other; and yet He is absent, because our eyes are holden. There is a Second Coming, relative to which the first was merely a type, yet a great reality. The truth that Jesus Christ come in the flesh is the Son of God, forms the foundation-stone of Christianity;

yet St. Paul says, "Yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet henceforth know we Him no more." For what was Jesus Christ but God manifest in flesh, the incarnation of every divine quality? In Him is revealed the fact that man may contain the fulness of Deity; that the apparent limitation of the human form is not necessarily any limitation whatever. Sin, self-will, which means conscious separation from the divine will, that is the real limitation; there is no other possible to man. One Man in human form has all power in heaven and on earth; in Him dwells the fulness of the Godhead; apart from Him it is impossible to see or know God even in idea. In Him the Son of God and the Son of Man are one. In us the Son of God and the Son of Man are at variance: the evil that He would not, we do; and the good that He would, we do not. He came and made an atonement or reconciliation between the two, making of twain one New Man, thus making peace; and revealed that such atonement can only be effected by crucifixion and death, that the Son of God may rise in His glory. Be crucified with Christ; show forth His death by dying to all that obstructs the free course of the divine life in you; drink His cup, and be baptized with His baptism. Thus, in every celebration of the Eucharist, Christ is set forth in His nature and work. His self-sacrifice, His atonement is manifested. In the second sacrament the first appears in a higher form. Water washes the skin merely, the outer surface of the body, as an external reformation goes no deeper than the outward conduct. There is a more complete bodily cleansing. Pure blood, made from pure food, flowing through every vein and artery, carries away diseased and effete matter from the system, and renews the whole body.

So "Christ has loved us, and washed us in His blood. The blood of Christ cleanses from all sin." How does blood cleanse? Not by any external application, but by circulating freely through every part of the being: "Except ye *drink* the blood of the Son of Man, ye have no life in you." It is not a faith in the historical fact that Christ's blood was, once for all, shed on Calvary some eighteen centuries since, that can impart spiritual life to any one. The knowledge of what He was and did can only lead us to learn of Him, that we may be and do according to His life. There must be an actual appropriation and assimilation of the life so given, and ever being given. We are baptized into His death, that we may arise and walk in newness of life; planted together in the likeness of that death, that we may be raised in the likeness of His resurrection. "Know this, that our old man is crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead is freed from sin. Now, if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him. For in that He died, He died unto sin once; but in that He liveth, He liveth unto God." In this sense—and we would not deny any other view of the meaning of Christ's death consistent with this view—in this sense we remember His death, that "we may know Him, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His suffering, being made conformable unto His death, and attain unto the resurrection from the dead." As the Apostle evidently by death, in this connection, does not mean the decease of the body,—for that fact leaves a man in his spiritual life as it found him, no better than he was before,—so the resurrection which he earnestly longs for is a resurrection which may be attained in this

life: a death to sin, a resurrection to righteousness, which is eternal life. Sin, in its origin and essential character, is the same in every man and in every period of the world's history. It has its abiding-place in the will, from whence it dominates, according to its strength, over every faculty of the soul. It is self-will in opposition to the divine will. If we consider any recorded act of transgression, from Adam's downwards, we shall find that the doer, in the act, practically says to his Creator, "Not thy will, but mine, be done." He separates himself from the Supreme Will, and in the act of separation dies to the true life—life in God. In the day, nay, in the very moment, that a man turns from the Tree of Life, the True Vine, he dies as a branch would in the assertion of its independence. True, such a death, dreadful as it may appear to the contemplation of a holy mind, must be needful to a real possession of the true life. Not merely every man, but every faculty in man, must accept God as Supreme Goodness, and hate evil perfectly, as knowing its real nature. Which had the more advanced character, the son that remained, or the prodigal that left and returned to his father's house? The latter knew from experience the worse than emptiness of a course of self-indulgence, and returned in humble penitence to serve, if he might, where he had formerly commanded. Perchance the envious elder brother had to experience afterwards the evil of separation, if only to open his soul to brotherly sympathy. To each of us, in compliance with our desire, our Father divides His substance, that our union and communion with Him may be perfected on our penitent return. "This my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found." The first aspect of the Eucharist is thus a commemoration of a death in order

to a resurrection: the death of the individual will, as separated from the Supreme Will, that there may be a birth and growth of a new will in union with the divine. The life of Christ was a constant crucifixion of whatever in His human nature was not in perfect harmony with the divine nature. The records of His genealogy have a greater significance than as proof of the fulfilment of prophecy. It matters very little to us who were His ancestors according to the flesh, considered merely as an historical fact. Why these two lists of names, which in their variations give rise to controversy? The names, surely, are given not to be read over unintelligently, as something magically sacred, but that we may reflect on the characters whom they represent. In these characters we may find, mingled with some growths of virtue, almost every form of sin that afflicts humanity. The Holy One, in taking a human nature—soul and body—from such a race, accepted humanity in its lowest and most degraded condition, and redeemed it. To a pure spirit no degree of subsequent self-sacrifice could equal this crucifixion. He numbered Himself with the transgressors, that He might put an end to transgression, and bring in everlasting righteousness. If even a sinful man, who with comparative feebleness only could realize the agony of a divided nature, cried out, "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" what must such union have been to the absolutely Holy? This human nature in its worst estate, with all inherited tendencies to evil, was the battle-ground of the tempter. Otherwise the temptation of Christ could have no more reality in it than an acted drama. No wonder that the beloved disciple insisted on the fact that Jesus Christ had indeed come in

the flesh, and marked its denial as the sign of Antichrist. The great significance of the incarnation, apart from which that fact is devoid of meaning, is that Christ overcame on the battle-ground of the evil one. "He suffered, being tempted, that He might be able to succour those that are tempted." "Tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin." In this light such a doctrine as that of the Immaculate Conception of Mary is indeed Antichrist.

One man sinned, and, as humanity is one, the corrupt taint spread through the whole body. The Son of God took on himself the body, not the flesh and blood merely, but the perverted will, and by the divine will in Him, and through Him in every man, overcame and condemned sin in the flesh. His every word of resistance, not to what we might discern as evil, but what He knew to be such, is a reference to the Father's will. "I came not to do mine own will, but the will of Him that sent me." In the wilderness conflict each suggestion of the tempter is met with an appeal to the written will. He was hungry, but the natural craving for bread, and still more the spiritual hunger, to be seen and known as the Son of God, must be resisted till the Father sees good to satisfy it. All the kingdoms of the world and their glory, which to Him meant the affections of mankind, He will not move a finger to obtain, except in the way the Father pleases to appoint. Even His mother and His brethren take the place of the tempter in urging Him to show forth His glory as the Son of God, and thus compel belief in His character and mission; and mother, brethren, and disciples have all to be denied for the sake of a higher filial obedience. Surely such a self-sacrificing life and death is vicarious in the fullest sense; surely He hath borne

our griefs and carried our sorrows, and still bears and carries them in every individual member of His Body—"Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" Yet every such member is called on to make a vicarious self-sacrifice; for no man liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself! If one member suffers, every other, in his degree, suffers with him, or there is a schism in the body. Jesus Christ is not a man merely—He is Man; He is that in every one which makes him a man. The realization of this truth made St. Paul say, "I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." He is the true light that enlighteneth every man, and the true life that quickeneth every man. The first Adam was made a living soul, the second a life-giving Spirit. The soul that sinneth dies: all have sinned, consequently there is a sense in which it may be affirmed that every man loses his soul. To him who voluntarily accepts for himself the death and resurrection of the Saviour, the new soul or the new man is being formed while the old man, the body of sin, is being destroyed. As it is in the gradual change and renewal of the body, old things in the soul have passed away, all things are made new. This may be put to actual proof by any Christian. Let him reflect what were his desires, hopes, and feelings while he lived to himself, compared with what they are now that he is living to God. Let him consider whether he could have even friendly intercourse with his former self. There has been a real death, and the beginning of a new life—the life of Christ. There has been an actual spiritual reception and assimilation of the Spiritual Body of the Archetypal Man, Christ Jesus, according to His most emphatic declaration, "As the living Father hath

sent me, and I live by the Father, so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me." The spiritual flesh of Christ has become his flesh, the flesh of a little child of the kingdom of heaven; the spiritual blood of Christ circulates through every atom of the new spiritual man. Yet the individual identity has been retained throughout that death and this resurrection. Yea, the man has a more real, because a better, individuality than he had before. Whosoever committeth sin is the servant or slave of sin, but the servant abideth not for ever; there is no permanency, no eternity in evil or corruption; it is only the Son that abideth ever. Where the Son makes free, there is freedom indeed. The true man in the sinner is under bondage to unsatisfying desires.* If it were possible for a man to be wholly evil, he

* As a recoil from the "evangelical" doctrine of eternal punishment, there is a belief rapidly extending among various denominations, that the Scriptures teach the utter destruction or annihilation of the wicked. No doubt there is a very real sense in which such a doctrine is taught in Scripture. It is a glorious truth, part of the glad tidings to all people, that the wicked shall be utterly destroyed. But who are the wicked? There can be no question as to the answer of Scripture—"There is none righteous, no not one;" "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." But "all have sinned." "God hath concluded all in unbelief, that He might have mercy upon all." It is true that there is no rest for the wicked,—that penalty everlastingly accompanies transgression,—and that the sinner shall be utterly destroyed; but the truth contained both in the doctrine of eternal punishment and in that of the destruction of the wicked applies to every son and daughter of Adam. There is a merely human, and therefore very imperfect, way of destroying an enemy, by slaying him; and there is a divine way of making him a friend, by destroying the enmity in him. Which of these is worthy of the infinite love of Omnipotence every man will decide according to his conception of the Divine nature.

would have no guilt, no responsibility, any more than has a venomous serpent. He would fulfil the only law known, or that can be known, to him—the law of his being. Divine light and life, first manifested as law, brings the knowledge of sin; and, in effect, through the consciousness of transgression, constitutes the sinner. While under the dominion of sin, man has less freedom than the irrational animals. The divine law, as it shows him what he ought to be and is not, reveals more perfectly his enslaved condition. Christ's life, as revealed to him and in him, becomes more than an example; it becomes a power, the power of God, redeeming him from subjection to evil powers. When this redemption is complete, man is free absolutely; because every thought, feeling, and wish, being in full accord with the divine will, he has, and can do, immediately, whatever he wills. Than this no greater freedom is conceivable: it is to be free even as God is free; and to have perfect freedom is to have perfect individuality; to have a conscious existence in the highest realm of Being—the Kingdom of Heaven.

It is well that, with the docility of little children, we should, in the beginning of the Christian life, receive many truths dogmatically, on the authority of teachers in whom we can place confidence; for such docility is the holding forth of the hand to receive bread; but if a doctrine thus received is put aside without further consideration, as something to be believed rather than understood, it loses its meaning and its power, and may be taken from us at the first assault of any one who has, after superficial consideration, rejected it. The doctrine of Christ's divinity is the doctrine on which His Church is founded. Those who formally deny it receive a reflex blessing from it, equally

with those who formally acknowledge it. We at first receive this doctrine, on the authority of Scripture, as interpreted by the Church; but if it does not become rationally apprehended, the passages on which it rests may be in some cases rejected as spurious or faulty in translation, in others explained away as figurative. When we have rationally apprehended the doctrine (and wherefore should we not so apprehend it? is not regenerate reason the wisdom of God in man?), it rests on a basis that can only be overthrown by the destruction of reason itself. Leaving out of account such an exceptional anomaly as Atheism, which after all may only mean the denial of a false image of Deity, the answer to the question, "Who is God?" which would command universal assent is, "The All-Father." In this answer we have a basis of knowledge: we know something, at least, of what is implied by fatherhood; for we have, and are, fathers. God being the Supreme, whatever may be attributed to Him must be perfect of its kind; therefore Fatherhood in Him must be absolute Fatherhood. Paternity implies sonship, or the word has no meaning that we can understand, and ought not to be used as if it had. Now a son is of the nature and substance of his father; such an outbirth of his form and quality that on attaining to maturity there is no difference as to essential manhood between father and son. So, if Christ is in any conceivable sense the Son of God, He is of the same nature and substance as the Father. Still more, as the divine Fatherhood must be perfect relationship, relative to which human parentage is merely a type, the Sonship must be perfect. If Christ as the Son of man is veritable Man, as the Son of God He is very God, or the relation in Deity is less perfect than the relation in

humanity. Here we approach the heart of the difficulty—a false idea of the divine unity.

If the doctrine of the Divinity of Christ is the basis of the most advanced form of religion, the belief in the unity of Deity is the basis of religion itself. God is One, and God is Spirit. The oneness, then, is not a material but a spiritual unity. Whatever—whether of doctrine, worship, or practice—is opposed to that unity is idolatry. Whoever thinks of any man or thing as equal with God, divides in his thought the unity, and makes two or more gods. Idolatry is in the first word of temptation—"Ye shall be as gods." If thou be the Son of God, do this or that; that is, assert your independency and equality. Yet men may be called gods, because of the Word of God, the latent divinity, in them; and, as our Lord says, the Scripture is not thereby broken. "I have said, Ye are gods, and all of you are children of the Most High." His claim to divinity is more complete. "Say ye of Him whom the Father hath sanctified and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest, because I said, I am the Son of God?" The fuller divinity results from the santification or holiness. To attain to perfect purity is to be one with God. Christ never Himself claimed to be *equal* with the Father: that would have been as abhorrent to His nature as sin. For equality means separation and independency of life. He claimed to be *One* with the Father—an essentially different thing. To be equal with God, if that were possible, is to be a god; to be one with God is to be God. Christ attained in His outermost nature, or humanity, to whatever was in His inmost nature, absolute union with God, by having no wish or thought separate from the divine will; for unity of will is essential unity. He who at this

day urges the puerile objection to the doctrine of the Trinity, that three cannot be one, insults his own reason more than the reason of him to whom he speaks. Not to refer to spiritual things, we have, for instance, one Bible, though it consists of two separate divisions, each of which contains several books written by different persons: not to speak of the multiplicity of copies in the same language, printed in various types and forms, we can recognise the one book in all its numerous versions and translations. Why? Not because the books are bound together, but because of the unity of purpose which obtains in every separate book, and in all versions and translations of the whole. We have four Gospels, yet the Gospel itself is one in all. The universe is one, although it consists of many worlds, each separate, yet most intimately in union with the whole. In fact, there cannot be unity without plurality. A unit cannot make unity; and no number of individualities can mar unity if every one is in perfect concord with each and all. Speaking of a perfect marriage, or what God hath joined together, our Lord said of husband and wife, "They are no more twain, but one." In such union, if any such exists out of heaven, there can be no sense of superiority, or even of equality—simply of oneness.

The ideal of a perfect Church, as seen by St. Paul in that aspect of the Eucharist from which it derives its highest and most significant name—the Communion—is, that it makes and represents a perfect spiritual unity. "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? For we being many are one bread, one body; for we are all partakers of that

one bread." "For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of the body, being many, are one body; so also is Christ. For by one Spirit we are all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Gentiles, whether bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit. For the body is not one member, but many. If the foot shall say, because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where were the smelling? And if they were all one member, where were the body? But now many members, yet but one body. . . . Now ye are the Body of Christ, and members in particular." It is hardly possible to place the idea of Christian union and the relation of every member of the Church to each other and to Christ in a more forcible light. All that may be reasonably urged is, that no such union has ever been realized in any society on earth. It is, however, to be fulfilled; for it has been fulfilled in Christ, who is the sure prophecy and pledge of its fulfilment in His members. Christ is absolutely one with the Father; and the Lord's Supper, the communion of His body and blood, is a continuous testimony that the prayer that they all may be one in Him and in each other, even as He and the Father are one, shall be answered. Then shall that saying be fulfilled, that the Son, the undivided regenerated Humanity, shall deliver up the Kingdom to the Father, that God may be all in all—the whole in every individuality. If we cannot conceive of the fulness of the Divine Glory, we may know that it is essentially perfect union and fellowship in the Lord. We can conceive of a spiritual community—an innumerable multitude of one heart and of one soul,

through every individual member of which the central divine life shall flow unimpeded in all fulness; each member receiving that life with a difference suited to his individual genius and place in the universal Body of God—Glorified Humanity—of which Christ is the first-fruits, the first-born among many brethren; for we are heirs of God, *joint heirs* with Christ. The Patriarchs, Moses, David, Solomon, and other Old-Testament worthies, were types of Christ, because each had, in an imperfect way, something of true manhood in him. Only so far as each had the Christ-nature in him could he represent Christ, or be a partial prophecy of Him. They had broken fragments of the Divine Body, which Christ gathered up and perfected in Himself. They were sons of men; He was Son of Man, because He was Son of God. Whoever does not recognise God in Christ, worships he knows not what: some all-pervading influence, some diffused quality not so real as any of the imponderable forces of nature. God in inmost being, apart from Humanity, is incomprehensible; God unmanifested can be nothing to any man but a name. The Father is not without the Son, nor the Son without the Father. No man hath seen God at any time; and no man, except partially, hath seen his fellow-man at any time. We cannot yet comprehend, not even in ourselves, inmost Being, though we believe in its existence. In human parentage the son is apart from the father; in divine Fatherhood the Father is in the Son, and the Son in the Father: there is reciprocal union and communion. The Father loveth the Son, and hath given Him all things. Love has nothing—no power, no wisdom, no glory—that it does not desire to impart to the object of its affections: "Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear

much fruit." Nay, Love can have no feeling of superiority towards any to whom it proceeds. It must be that each member of the divine body will acknowledge its dependence on God, the inmost divine life and source of all existence, and that the feeling of each individual in the heavenly kingdom will be, "My Father, yea, every one of my brothers and sisters, is greater than I;" for humility must there exist in its perfection; but no thought of superiority can have any place in a heart filled with the infinite love of God.

Such a community is the Lord's Supper in its fulfilment. In this it becomes the marriage supper of the Lamb, in which the Bridegroom eats with His Church the new bread and drinks the new wine of the kingdom of God. This is the fulfilment of the earnest expectation of the creature while subject to vanity; the manifestation of the sons of God, and the glorious liberty of his children. In the sight of God, sonship is in every man born into the world; in relation to man, sonship is manifested in the putting off of the evil and the temporal, and thus rising to the consciousness of the divine Fatherhood and brotherhood. Nothing can proceed from the Infinite that does not partake of His infinity. The term finite merely expresses a consciousness of separation from the Infinite One. Whoever is fully united with God becomes one with Him in His eternity and infinity. Does not the cavil at the idea of eternal sonship arise from the conceit of ignorance? Is it not easier and more rational to believe in an "Everlasting Father," than to imagine the existence of infinite love without an object for its exercise?

We first form a limited idea of the nature of sonship from

our own knowledge, and then transfer it with all its imperfections to the Highest. Sonship has no necessary connection with time; it is the relation of the outer consciousness to the inmost. Certain modes of its manifestation become apparent in time, but the relation itself must have its existence in Eternal Being. Thus the Christian reason may discern how Jesus Christ may be at once Son of God and Son of Man, in whom all the fulness of Deity dwells bodily.

Without in the least degree seeking to weaken, even in its crudest form, that great expectation of the Church, the Second Advent, may it not be possible to look forward to a fulfilment of that hope, which, while including its personal character, shall be more glorious than a merely personal appearing could be? If a personal advent of the individual Christ is needful for a more glorious appearing, that hope shall also be realized. Suppose, as in the most rudimentary form of the doctrine, Christ should visibly descend and set up what on His first advent He rejected, an earthly dominion, of which the once sacred city, Jerusalem, should be the centre, and that He should be outwardly acknowledged and worshipped by all nations as their earthly Sovereign. If such an event could not effect a radical change in men's hearts, the only thing worth caring for by Christ or the Christian, what would it profit? He could teach no closer relationship between God and man than he has taught and still teaches by His Word and Spirit. He could declare no higher law than the first and greatest of all commandments, to love God with all the heart, soul, strength, and mind, and our neighbour as ourselves, and preach no more comprehensive and divine discourse than the Sermon on the Mount. In His individual presence He

has never left us. He could in a moment visibly manifest Himself to any man or number of men, if such manifestation would do them any real good. True, He is in heaven, but the kingdom of heaven is within us; it is righteousness, and peace, and joy, in the communion of the Holy Spirit. The only personal reign Jesus Christ died for and lives for, brother, is to reign in your and my heart. He seeks first in you and in me God's kingdom and righteousness. Christ formed in us, and manifested through us, is a more glorious appearing of Him than that on the Mount of Transfiguration. By none but His disciples can His glory be seen; to none but His disciples did He appear after His resurrection, except to Saul, and to him only as a light which blinded and prostrated him. It must ever be so. No man can see Christ except as Christ is in him, because none can discern spiritual quality but they who have it. Only the pure in heart can see God. Christ is Light: can darkness see light? Christ is Holiness: can impurity see holiness? Christ is Love, Meekness, and Lowliness; and such qualities are for ever invisible to the self-seeking and ambitious. It is only as the Christ-nature is formed and grows within man that he can behold the glory of the Redeemer; and when so formed, he will be able to see Christ in any man in whom the Christian character is perfected. That even the most sinful can in some feeble and remote degree appreciate a virtuous action, is because the germ of the divine nature is in every man, though more or less buried in the corrupt deathly nature. Whatever doctrine respecting the Second Advent would localize Christ, saying, "Lo here!" or "there!" is limited and very imperfectly true. The Holy Communion of the Lord's Supper reveals a more glorious advent than

that—communion in the Body of Christ till He come. Where and when? In you who thus partake, when, through dying His death and living His life, you have become one in Him. Which is the more glorious conception of the Second Advent—Christ's visible reign at Jerusalem, commanding the outward homage of a world, or Christ visible in your brother and sister, and still more, Christ visible in the heavenly character of every man and woman you meet?

The humanitarian or social aspects of the Eucharist are appreciated by many who do not recognise the need of an outward observance of the rite. In Lowell's poem of "Sir Launfal," the knight, after a fruitless quest for the Holy Grail, divides his last piece of bread with a leper, who, as Christ in that guise, says—

> "Lo, it is I, be not afraid!
> In many climes without avail
> Thou hast spent thy life for the Holy Grail;
> Behold it is here—this cup which thou
> Didst fill at the streamlet for me but now;
> This crust is my body broken for thee,
> This water His blood that died on the tree;
> The Holy Supper is kept, indeed,
> In whatso we share with another's need;
> Not what we give, but what we share,—
> For the gift without the giver is bare;
> Who gives himself with his alms feeds three,—
> Himself, his hungering neighbour, and me."

The truth and reality of this sentiment will be acknowledged by very many who can see no beauty or use in the appointed ordinance; not reflecting that but for its institution and faithful observance in the visible Church, this and many other true and beautiful expressions in word and

humanity. Here we approach the heart of the difficulty—a false idea of the divine unity.

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day urges the puerile objection to the doctrine of the Trinity, that three cannot be one, insults his own reason more than the reason of him to whom he speaks. Not to refer to spiritual things, we have, for instance, one Bible, though it consists of two separate divisions, each of which contains several books written by different persons: not to speak of the multiplicity of copies in the same language, printed in various types and forms, we can recognise the one book in all its numerous versions and translations. Why? Not because the books are bound together, but because of the unity of purpose which obtains in every separate book, and in all versions and translations of the whole. We have four Gospels, yet the Gospel itself is one in all. The universe is one, although it consists of many worlds, each separate, yet most intimately in union with the whole. In fact, there cannot be unity without plurality. A unit cannot make unity; and no number of individualities can mar unity if every one is in perfect concord with each and all. Speaking of a perfect marriage, or what God hath joined together, our Lord said of husband and wife, "They are no more twain, but one." In such union, if any such exists out of heaven, there can be no sense of superiority, or even of equality—simply of oneness.

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INTRODUCTION.

IT may seem strange to include in the "Papers for the Present Day" a portion of the writings of St. Augustine; but the object of this series is not merely to diffuse the light of our own time, but to give prominence to anything which may be of the nature of light, from whatever quarter it may come to us. And the light of the present day, so far as it is only light intellectual, requires to be corrected and kept in tone with that contemplative and reverential spirit which, while it characterizes the whole works, in an eminent degree distinguishes the Confessions of St. Augustine. For, although it is far from being meant, that a reverent tone is only to be found in the writings of the past, it would be difficult to find anything, whether of the present or the past, which would better supply the correction that is sought, than the paper which we now publish.

To those unacquainted with the mind of St. Augustine, or who cannot obtain his works in an inexpensive and portable form, this little treatise will be specially welcome. It is a new translation by the Rev. Walter Bell, Chaplain to the Bishop of Argyll and the Isles; and has been carefully compared with former translations, and their rendering

adopted wherever they appeared to have the advantage. No more useful little volume than this could be placed (after Holy Scripture) in the hands of the student of the present day, whether his mind be of a devout caste or otherwise, giving, as it does, the key-note to a great and heavenly mind.

The readers of this treatise will require to bear in mind—

1. That the social condition from which St. Augustine emerged, and to which he makes frequent allusion, was of a far lower character than it has ever been since Christianity leavened the world, and that the writer's piety and the world's morality must be gauged and reviewed accordingly.

2. That already, even in the fourth century, such corruption of the principles of the doctrine of Christ had taken place as to require the reader to be on his guard against those fundamental errors into which the Gulf Stream of the Church soon afterwards poured itself.

St. Augustine lived at the commencement of that epoch when Love the gift became Love the debt: when the vision, as seen by the Apostles, of God revealing Himself in His Son, and guaranteeing the character and extent of the Revelation by the acceptance of suffering and death, whereby it was manifested that His providential laws of penalty and death were not to be accounted as evidence of retribution and hatred, but of correction and remedy: when the spirit in which these laws were accepted was that of the mind of Jesus Christ according to His own prayers, "Thy will be done," "Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Thy sight:" when such acceptance was felt to be a life over which death had no power—when these were superseded by the conception of the work of Christ, as a scheme

whereby the sinner was to be released from the penalty of sin and translated in due time into an artificial heaven, if only he believed and laid hold of it. The true part—for there was a true part—of that conception being that God's revelation of Himself in Christ was altogether of free grace and a manifestation of love; while the evil part was that all dependent upon that Revelation was so interpreted as to make the work of Christ a pacification of God, and the sacraments of His Church negotiable equivalents of value or passports to God's favour. Something akin to this may be observed in the aspect from which baptism (and be it remarked, adult baptism) had come to be regarded in the days of St. Augustine, and especially the Eucharist as he commemorates it at his mother's grave as a means of benefit to her. We need not here touch upon the question of prayer for the dead, further than to remark, that to a mind like his, so devout and so tender withal, such prayer would present no difficulty. To him it would seem in nowise strange that, efficacious for the living, prayer should likewise be offered in behalf of those who had passed through the gate of death. God was not the God of the dead, but of the living. All lived unto Him. Death could not separate between Him and them. He was their Father, whether they were in this world or had passed beyond it.

Nor need we do other than glance at the ceremony at the tomb, being no more than a memorial of the same character as the early martyrs' communion or commemoration at the grave.* What we would observe and dwell upon is the change now coming over the Church in the belief of

* See "Service for Consecrating Churchyards in the Diocese of Argyll and the Isles."

there being a *sacrificium propitiatorium* in the commemoration of the Eucharist. Looking at the opening of the treatise and the general tone of his writings, we cannot think that St. Augustine's relations with God were such as to lead him to suppose that he was brought in any degree closer to Him by a sacrifice external to himself, or nearer and nearer by repeated immolations of the body of Christ. We cannot think so. Rather must we believe that what St. Augustine felt was that he was brought so near to God in Christ, and was so in love with what he saw of God in Christ, that while nothing could bring him actually nearer, yet anything which would recall or represent God's sacrifice in Christ would be specially dear and precious. Such in an eminent degree would be the Eucharist, and notably so in times of trial and affliction, as at his mother's tomb.

But the change was coming: the danger was even then at the door. Not long was it until the sacraments, which were to him the signs and seals of an eternal love going forth and revealing, not indeed anything new—least of all making any change in the mind of God—but declaring what had ever been, and ever would be, and must be there, though only manifested in the end of time—were converted into a *mysterium* not to be understood, and which was finally misunderstood; and so a means whereby the eternal laws of God were to be set aside and God Himself to be dealt with, and made more and more placable in proportion as the Eucharist was celebrated. So it came to pass that the symbols of the death of Christ were taken literally, and interpreted in the light of the Old Testament sacrifices; until the Church, which was to leaven the world, became, like another ark of the deluge, wherein a few, unclean as

well as clean, might float securely into another world, while all the rest, the great majority of mankind, were left to destruction.

These are considerations to be borne in mind in reading St. Augustine, while his deep piety—his real union with God—his exquisite tenderness, we should be poor to miss. It is from this point of view that this little work is offered to those who might not otherwise become acquainted with the mind of the writer, while it is at the same time thought that it will form a worthy companion to those papers already published to meet the wants of the present day.

A. E., Bp.

THE EARLY YEARS OF AUGUSTINE.

IT has occurred to the translator that it would not be out of place to prefix to this ninth book of the "Confessions of St. Augustine," a brief sketch of the author's life previous to the time of his baptism.

Aurelius Augustinus, the son of Patricius and Monica, was born at Thagaste, in Africa, on the 13th of November, A.D. 354. We know little of his father Patricius, except that he was a freeman and a man of but small estate, and that he was a heathen at the time of his marriage with Monica, who herself was the daughter of Christian parents. Patricius (who seems to have been somewhat indifferent in regard to such matters), though not a believer himself, allowed his wife the free exercise of her religion, and permitted her to bring up her family in the Christian faith. We are told, indeed, by Augustine, that all the house believed, except his father alone.

On account of the plenary remission of sins, which was thought to accompany the rite of baptism, it was not unusual in that age to delay the administration of that sacrament to as late a period as possible; and therefore, although Augus-

tine was admitted a catechumen in infancy, by being signed with the cross and salted with salt—a rite which is still retained in the Baptismal Office of the Roman Church—he was not actually baptized. In his early boyhood he suffered from a serious illness, and his mother then thought of having him baptized; but as he soon recovered, his baptism was again deferred, because she believed that sin committed after baptism was much more perilous than that which was committed before.

The parents of Augustine appear to have spared no pains to give him the best education that they could according to their means. Like many a clever boy, he seems, however, to have wanted application. He speaks of his having been *forced* to learn reading, writing, and arithmetic, and he enlarges on the invincible repugnance which he felt to the study of the Greek classics. Virgil, however, he enjoyed, and doubtless would have had the same delight in Homer, but for the difficulty of the foreign language, which completely took away any pleasure which he might otherwise have derived from the fable.

When he had reached the age of fifteen, he returned from Madaura (a neighbouring city, whither he had gone to learn grammar and rhetoric), and spent a year idly at home whilst his father was endeavouring to provide the means for sending him to Carthage for the further prosecution of his studies. This was accomplished at length, and Augustine went to Carthage. Whilst pursuing his career there as a student, which he did with considerable success, he gave way to many of the temptations of a great city; he was, however, recalled to more serious thought by the perusal of Cicero's "Hortensius," and became a lover of wisdom, in pursuit of

which he turned to the sacred Scriptures, supposing that in them he would find that of which he was in search. But not understanding the real purport of the sacred writings, and thinking them inferior in dignity to those of Cicero, he became dissatisfied with them; and having come in contact with the sect of the Manichæans, he was led to embrace their system, which seemed to him to be more philosophical, and to convey a truer notion of the nature of God, than that of the Catholic Church.

Whilst Augustine was at Carthage, his father, Patricius, died, having become a Christian shortly before his death. And about that time, his illegitimate son, Adeodatus, was born.

About the same period, Monica (who never ceased to lament the errors of her son, and was so displeased with him that she would scarcely permit him to eat at the same table with her) had a dream which made a remarkable impression upon her. She imagined that she was standing upon a certain wooden rule, and saw a beautiful youth with a smiling countenance coming to her, whilst she herself was overwhelmed with grief; and that when the youth asked her why she grieved, she told him that she was bewailing her son's condition; that he bade her look and observe; and that she did so, and saw Augustine standing beside her. This dream Monica interpreted as a message from God to tell her that her son would be brought back to the Church and to herself.

Some time afterwards Augustine's mother besought a certain learned bishop (who himself had been a Manichee) to converse with her son and endeavour to reclaim him. The bishop excused himself on the ground that Augustine was

too much puffed up with the novelty of his heresy to listen to instruction, but that in a while he would discover his errors. And when Monica importuned him to try and do something in the matter, he said, "Go thy ways. Farewell! for it cannot be that the son of those tears should perish."

From his nineteenth to his eight-and-twentieth year, he and his Manichæan associates lived, as he says, "seduced and seducing, deceiving and being deceived, in divers lusts, openly, by sciences which are called liberal; secretly, with a false-named religion: here proud, there superstitious, everywhere vain."

During those years he taught rhetoric as a profession, first at Thagaste, his native town, and afterwards at Carthage. We necessarily omit many incidents of his life which are mentioned in his Confessions; but we must not omit to notice that at this period of it he was greatly addicted to the study of astrology, the uncertainty of which as a science, however, he was not long in discovering; and we must notice also that he then wrote several works, chiefly metaphysical.

When in his twenty-ninth year, there came to Carthage Faustus, a famous bishop amongst the Manichees, and from him Augustine expected to obtain a solution of the many difficulties which he had met with in the Manichæan system. But Faustus ingenuously confessed that he was not a man of learning, and admitted that he was unable to solve the questions which Augustine had propounded to him. Finding then that this celebrated teacher knew even less than himself, Augustine's faith in the Manichæan system was grievously shaken; still he did not abandon it altogether.

Shortly after this, Augustine determined to leave Car-

thage, and go to Rome, partly with the view of bettering his circumstances, but chiefly because he had heard that in Rome the students were better behaved, and gave less trouble to their professors than those at Carthage. But when he arrived at Rome, he found that there were other difficulties there which he had not calculated on; and hearing that the Milanese had sent to Rome for a professor of rhetoric, he applied for the appointment, and obtained it.

Augustine was accompanied to Milan by his friend and former pupil, Alypius, who was desirous of establishing himself there as a lawyer, and shortly afterwards they were joined by another African friend, Nebridius, a great lover of wisdom.

They had not been long at Milan, when Monica herself came to reside there, in order to be near her son. At Milan Augustine soon became acquainted with Ambrose, the bishop, who seems from the first to have taken great interest in him, and who was ultimately a chief instrument, under God, in inducing him to give up his errors, and to profess himself a believer. When Augustine first began to attend the bishop's preaching, he did so rather as being attracted by his eloquence, than as hoping to derive any benefit from it; but by degrees the truth dawned upon him, and he again became a catechumen of the Church.

It was long, however, ere Augustine could bring himself to accept altogether the doctrines of the Church. This is not the place to recount the very painful mental struggles which he went through in his search after truth; and how he was kept back from what he sought by the desire of worldly distinction, and by those irregularities of conduct from which he was not yet free. Nor can we notice here

the conversations on these subjects which he had with his friends. For these we must refer the reader to the Confessions themselves. Still it would be wrong to pass by altogether the very touching account of his conversion with which the eighth book ends, and which forms so fitting an introduction to the little treatise which we lay before our readers.

One day, when Nebridius was absent, Augustine and Alypius received a visit from Pontitianus, a countryman of theirs, and an officer in the Emperor's court, and he, seeing a book lying upon the table, took it up and opened it, and finding it to be St. Paul, smiling, said to Augustine that he both wondered and rejoiced to find such a book before him. And when Augustine told him that he paid great attention to the Scriptures, his friend began to speak about St. Anthony the hermit, and told how that one afternoon at Treves, he himself and three of his friends went out for a walk, two by two, and that two of them came to a small convent, where they happened to find a "Life of St. Anthony," and, reading it, they both resolved at once to give up their places at court, and to remain where they were. This story made a great impression upon Augustine. It led him to reflect upon his past life—his love of pleasure—his desire of worldly distinction. He was miserable. There was a little garden attached to the house where they resided. Thither he retired, and Alypius followed him. They sat down and conversed. Augustine was in an agony of tror [illegible] e up, and left his friend Alypius. He [illegible] was a crisis in his life. He felt that [illegible] is filthiness must end. He sent up thes [illegible], "How long? How long

to-morrow and to-morrow? Why not now? Why is there not this hour an end to my uncleanness?" As he was speaking, he heard from a neighbouring house a voice, as of a child, repeating the words, "Tolle lege, tolle lege"—"Take up and read, take up and read." He considered whether he had ever heard of any play in which such words were repeated; and not remembering any, he looked upon this as a voice from God, bidding him open the Scriptures. He had left the book where Alypius was sitting. He went back for it. He opened it, and read the verse—*Not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and impurities, not in contention and envy. But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ.* No further did he read, nor was it necessary. For immediately, at the end of this sentence, as by a light of security infused into his heart, all the darknesses of doubt fled away.

The sequel must be told in his own words:—"Then inserting my finger, or I know not what other mark, I shut the book, and, with countenance now tranquil, I acquainted Alypius. And what was wrought in himself, which I knew not, he thus made known to me. He asked to see what I had read, and I showed him, and he looked even further than I had read; for I was ignorant of what followed. But this followed, '*Him that is weak in faith receive,*' which he took to himself, and opened to me. And by this admonition was he strengthened, and by a good resolution and purpose most agreeable to his character (in which he did always far differ from me for the better), without any turbulent delay, he joined me. Thence we go in to my mother; we acquaint her: she rejoices. We narrate how it was done: she exults and triumphs and blesses Thee, *who art able to*

do above what we ask or think. For she saw much more granted her by Thee concerning me than she had been accustomed, by her most sorrowful and lamentable groanings, to ask. For Thou hadst so converted me unto Thyself, that I sought neither a wife, nor any hope of this world, standing in that rule of faith in which Thou hadst showed me unto her in a vision so many years before, and Thou didst *convert her mourning into joy* much more fruitful than she had desired. . . . ."

After the incidents recorded in the ninth book of the Confessions, Augustine returned to Africa, where he was soon after ordained presbyter by Valerius, Bishop of Hippo. In the year 395, he was consecrated bishop by the same Valerius, whose coadjutor he became, and whom he shortly afterwards succeeded in the see. Augustine died on the 28th of August, A.D. 430.

ST. AUGUSTINE AND HIS MOTHER.

Being the Ninth Book of His Confessions.

LORD, I am Thy servant, I am Thy servant, and the son of Thine handmaid. Thou hast broken my bonds in sunder. To Thee will I sacrifice the oblation of praise. Let my heart and my tongue praise Thee, and let *all my bones say, Lord, who is like unto Thee?* Let them say, and answer Thou me, and *say unto my soul, I am thy salvation.* Who am I, and what am I? What had I, not of evil? My deeds? or if not deeds, my words? or if not words, was my will? But Thou, O Lord, art good and merciful, and Thy right hand was regarding the profundity of my death, and from the bottom of my heart drawing forth an abyss of corruption. And this was the whole, not to will what Thou willedst, and to will what Thou willedst not. But where was it so long a time, and from what vast and secret depth was called forth in a moment my free will by which I might subdue my *neck* to Thy light *yoke*, and my *shoulders* to Thy light *burden*, O Christ Jesus, *my Helper and my Redeemer?* How sweet to me did it suddenly become to want the sweetnesses of toys; and those which I had feared to lose, I now rejoiced

to put away. For Thou didst cast them forth from me, Thou true and highest sweetness! Thou didst cast them forth, and Thou didst enter in instead of them, sweeter than any pleasure, though not to flesh and blood; clearer than any light, though more inward than any secret, higher than any honour, but not to the high in their own conceits. Now was my mind free from the gnawing cares of seeking for preferments, and of gaining, and of wallowing in filth, and of scratching the scab of my lusts, and I did prattle to Thee, my Brightness, and my Riches, and my Health, O Lord my God.

II.—2. And it pleased me in Thy sight, not tumultuously to rend away, but gently to withdraw the service of my tongue from the marts of loquacity, lest youths, meditating not Thy law, not Thy peace, but lying sophisms and forensic contentions, should purchase any longer from my mouth arms for their own fury. And opportunely very few days now remained till the vintage vacation, and I determined to endure them that I might leave in the usual way, and, bought back by Thee, might not now return as one to be sold. Our purpose then was known to Thee, but to men, except our own people, it was not. For it was agreed among ourselves that it should not be loosely divulged to any, although to us ascending from the *valley of wailing* and singing the song of degrees, Thou hadst given *sharp arrows and destroying coals* against *the subtle tongue*, which as advising would thwart, and as loving would consume us as it doth its meat.

3. Thou hadst pierced our hearts with Thy charity, and we carried Thy words transfixed in our inward parts; and the examples of Thy servants, whom from being black,

Thou hadst made bright, and from dead, alive, heaped together in the bosom of our thoughts, burned and consumed our heavy torpor, lest we should snik into the depths, and enkindled us so effectually that the winds of contradiction from a subtle tongue might enflame us more briskly, but could not extinguish us. Nevertheless, because on account of *Thy Name* which Thou hadst *hallowed* throughout the earth, our vow and purpose might have even some to commend it, it seemed like ostentation not to wait for the vacation now so near, but to withdraw previously from a public profession which was before the eyes of all; so that the mouths of all beholders turned towards this act of mine (had I resolved to anticipate the day of the Vintage Festival which was so near) would have said many things, as if I had been greedy of seeming a great one. And what purpose was it to me that there should be surmises and disputes concerning my intention, and *that our good should be evil spoken of?*

4. Moreover, because, that very summer, with too much literary work, my lungs had begun to give way, and to draw breath with difficulty, and by the pains of the chest to testify that they were hurt, and to refuse the more loud or lengthened speaking; it had troubled me at first, since it compelled me almost of necessity to lay down the burden of that professorship, or, if I could be cured and get better, certainly to intermit it. But when the full desire of being *still* and *seeing that Thou art the Lord* arose to me, and was established, Thou knowest, O my God, I began even to rejoice that I had also this excuse, and not a false one, which might moderate the offence taken by those men who for their own children's sakes wished me

never to be at liberty. Full, then, of such joy, I endured that interval of time until it had run out. I know not whether there were even twenty days, but yet they were endured bravely, for the covetousness which had used to support heavy business with me had departed, and I had been left to be pressed down, had not patience succeeded. That I sinned in this, some one of Thy servants my brethren may say, since, with a heart full in Thy service, I had suffered myself to sit even a single hour in the seat of falsehood. Yet *I* do not contend. But Thou, O Lord, most merciful, hast Thou not remitted this sin also, with others abhorrent and deadly, in the holy water?

III.—5. Verecundus was worn with anxiety about this our good, because, on account of his bonds, whereby he was most straitly bound, he saw that he himself must desert our society—not yet a Christian, his wife one of the faithful, yet by that very fetter, more tight than the rest, was he hindered from the journey which we had attempted. Nor would he be a Christian, he said, by any other way than by that by which he could not be. Kindly, indeed, he offered that as long as we would be there we should be in his country house. Thou wilt reward him, O Lord, *in the resurrection of the just*, since Thou hast already rewarded him with the *lot of the just*. For although in our absence, when we were already at Rome, he was seized with bodily sickness, and therein being made a Christian, and one of the faithful, he departed this life, so *Thou hadst mercy, not on him only, but on us also*, lest, considering the extreme kindness of our friend when he was not numbered in Thy flock, we should be tormented with intolerable grief. Thanks unto Thee, O Lord our God, we are Thine: Thy comforts

and consolations indicate, Faithful Promiser, Thou wilt render to Verecundus for that his country house at Cassiacum, where from the heat of the world we rested in Thee, the pleasantness of Thy Paradise ever green, since Thou hast forgiven him his sins upon earth in the milk-yielding mountain, Thy mountain, the fruitful mountain.

6. He was then troubled, but Nebridius was joyful. For although he also, not yet a Christian, had fallen into that pit of most pernicious error that he believed the flesh of the verity of Thy Son to be a phantom, yet emerging thence he believed as we did, not yet imbued with any sacraments of Thy Church, but a most ardent inquirer after truth. Whom, not long after our conversion and regeneration through Thy baptism, being also a faithful Catholic, serving Thee in perfect chastity and continence in Africa among his own people, when all his house had been made Christian through him, Thou didst loose from the flesh, and now he lives in Abraham's bosom. Whatever that be which is signified by that bosom, there my Nebridius lives, my sweet friend, but Thine adopted son from a bondsman—there he lives! For what other place is there for such a soul? There he liveth, whereof he asked me, an inexperienced being,* many things. Now he doth not put his ear to my mouth, but a spiritual mouth to Thy fountain, and drinketh, as much as he is able, wisdom for his thirst, happy without end. Nor do I think that he is so inebriated from it as to forget me, since Thou, O Lord, whom he drinketh, art mindful of us. So were we, then, consoling Verecundus, who was sad, as far as friendship permitted, that our conversion was of such sort, and exhorting him to become faithful according to his degree,

* Homuncionem inexpertum.

namely, of conjugal life; and awaiting Nebridius to follow us, which being so near he was all but doing, when behold those days rolled away at length, for they seemed long and many, in regard to the love of easeful liberty, that I might sing from every marrow, *My heart hath said unto Thee, I have sought Thy face; Thy face, O Lord, will I seek.*

IV.—7. And now the day was come wherein I was indeed to be released from my Rhetoric Professorship, from which, in thought, I had been already released. And it was done. And Thou didst root out my tongue, from whence Thou hadst already rooted out my heart; and rejoicing I blessed Thee, having gone to the villa with all my belongings. What I there did in writing (now indeed dedicated to Thy service, though still in this breathing-time, as it were, panting from the school of pride) my books, argued with those who were with me, and with myself alone in Thy presence, bear witness; but what things were argued with Nebridius, who was absent, my epistles testify. And when can time suffice me for commemorating all Thy great benefits towards us at that time, especially when hastening on to other greater things? For my remembrance recalls me, and sweet it is to me, O Lord, to confess to Thee by what inward pricks Thou hast tamed me, and how Thou hast levelled me; the *mountains and hills* of my thoughts being *humbled*, and hast *straightened my crookednesses*, and hast *smoothed my roughnesses;* and by what method Thou hast subdued even Alypius himself, the brother of my heart, to the Name of Thine Only-begotten Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, which at first he disdained to have inserted in our writings. For he wished them rather to savour of the *cedars* of the gymnasia, which *the Lord* hath now *broken*

and consolations indicate, Faithful Promiser, Thou wilt render to Verecundus for that his country house at Cassiacum, where from the heat of the world we rested in Thee, the pleasantness of Thy Paradise ever green, since Thou hast forgiven him his sins upon earth in the milk-yielding mountain, Thy mountain, the fruitful mountain.

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* Homuncionem inexpertum.

Nor if I said them, would they have so accepted them, as when spoken with myself and to myself in Thy presence out of the familiar affection of my mind.

9. I trembled with fear, and at the same time I warmed with hope and exultation in Thy mercy, O Father: and all these things issued forth through my eyes and my voice, when Thy good Spirit, turned towards us, said unto us, *O ye sons of men, how long heavy in heart, why do ye love vanity and seek a lie?* For I *had loved vanity and sought a lie. And Thou, O Lord,* hadst already *magnified Thy Holy One, raising Him from the dead and placing Him at Thy right hand,* whence He might *send from on high* His *promise, the Paraclete, the Spirit of Truth:* and He had sent Him already, but I knew it not. He had sent Him, because He had been already magnified, rising from the dead, and ascending into heaven. But before, *the Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.* And the Prophet cries, *How long heavy in heart? Why do ye love vanity, and seek a lie? And know ye that the Lord hath magnified His Holy One?* He cries, *How long?* He cries, *Know ye!* And I, so long not knowing, loved vanity and sought a lie: and therefore I heard and trembled, because it is said unto such as I remembered myself to have been. For in the phantasms which I had held for truths there was *vanity and a lie;* and I uttered many things vehemently and forcibly in the bitterness of my remembrance: which things, O that they had heard, who as yet *love vanity and seek a lie,* perchance they would have been troubled, and would have vomited it forth, and Thou wouldest have heard them when they cried unto Thee, since by a true death of the flesh He has died for us *who intercedeth with Thee for us.*

10. I read, *Be ye angry and sin not;* and how was I moved, O my God, who now had learned to be angry with myself for the past, that for what remaineth I might not sin. And deservedly to be angry, since it was not another nature of a people of darkness which had sinned for me, as they say who are not angry with themselves, *and treasure up for themselves wrath in the day of wrath and revelation of Thy just judgment.* Nor were my *good things* now without, nor were they sought with fleshly eyes in that sun. For they who wish to rejoice from without easily vanish away, and are poured forth in those things which *are seen and are temporal,* and lick the shadows of themselves in hungry thought. And O that they were wearied with hunger and would say, *Who will show us good things?* And we would say, and they would hear, *The light of Thy countenance is signed upon us.** For we are not *that Light which enlighteneth every man,* but are enlightened by Thee, that we, *who have been sometimes darkness, may be light in Thee.* O that they would see the Eternal Light within,† which I, since I had tasted it, grieved that I could not show them, whilst they brought me their heart in their eyes, without, from Thee, and said, *Who will show us good things?* For there, there had I been *angry* with myself, within, *in the chamber* where I had been pricked, where I had sacrificed, slaying my old self, and, the meditation of my renewal having begun, *hoping in Thee;* there Thou hadst begun to grow sweet unto me and hadst *put gladness in my heart.* And I cried out, reading these things without, and recognizing them within. Nor was I wishful to be multiplied with worldly goods, eating up time, and being eaten up by temporal things,

* Signatum est in nobis. † Internum lumen æternum.

when I had in Eternal Simplicity other *corn, and wine, and oil.*

11. And I cried in the following verse, with the deep cry of my heart, *O in peace, O in the Self-Same.** Oh, what did it say? *I will sleep, and take rest.* For who shall resist when *the saying which is written shall come to pass, Death is swallowed up in victory?* And Thou art surpassingly THAT SELF-SAME who art *not changed;* and in Thee is rest, forgetting all labours, since none other is with Thee, nor for the acquiring many other things which are not what Thou art. *But Thou, Lord, only hast established me in hope.* I read and I burned, nor did I find what to do to those deaf dead ones, of whom I had been one, a pestilent fellow, a bitter and blind barker against the writings honied with the honey of heaven, and luminous with Thy light. And I pined away about the writings inimical to this Scripture.

12. When shall I recall all the transactions of those holidays? Yet neither have I forgotten, nor will I be silent about the sharpness of Thy scourge, and the wonderful celerity of Thy mercy. With pain of the teeth then didst Thou excruciate me, and when it had become so great that I had not power to speak, it arose in my heart to exhort all my friends who were present to supplicate Thee for me—the God of all manner of health; and I wrote this on wax, and gave it them to read. Presently, as with suppliant affect we bended our knees, the pain fled away. But what pain? or how did it flee? I grew frightened, I confess, my Lord, my God! for never, from infancy, had I experienced the like. And Thy signs reached me in the depth,†

* O in pace, O in idipsum obdormiam, &c.
† Insinuati sunt mihi in profundo nutus tui.

and, rejoicing in faith, I praised Thy name; and that faith did not suffer me to be secure concerning my past sins, which had not yet been forgiven me through Thy Baptism.

V.—13. The vintage vacation being ended, I gave notice to the Milanese to provide for their scholars another seller of words, both because I had chosen to serve Thee, and because, on account of difficulty of breathing and pain of the chest, I was not equal for that profession. And I intimated by letters to Thy prelate, the holy man Ambrose, my former errors and my present wish, that he might advise what of Thy books it were best for me to read, whereby to become more prepared and more fitted for receiving so great a grace. And he recommended Isaiah the Prophet; I believe because he is, beyond the rest, a more clear foreteller of the Gospel and of the calling of the Gentiles. However, I, not understanding the first lesson in him, and supposing the whole to be like it, laid it by, to be resumed, being more experienced in the sayings of the Lord.

VI.—14. Then when the time came in which it was fitting that I should give in my name, having left the country, we returned to Milan. It pleased Alypius likewise to be born again in Thee along with me, being already clothed with the humility befitting Thy sacraments, and being a most brave tamer of the body, even to treading, with unaccustomed daring, the icy Italian soil with naked foot. We joined with us also the boy Adeodatus, born of me, after the flesh, of my sin. Thou hadst formed him well. He was almost fifteen years old, and in wit he excelled many grave and wise men. I acknowledge unto Thee Thy gifts, O Lord my God, Creator of all, and abundantly able to reform our deformities; for I had no part in that boy but

the sin. For that he was brought up by us in Thy discipline, it was Thou who hadst inspired us—none other. I acknowledge unto Thee Thy gifts. There is a book of ours which is entitled "De Magistro." He there discourses with me. Thou knowest that all the ideas on the part of the person conversing with me inserted there were his, when he was sixteen years old. Many other more wonderful things I experienced of him, that wit was to my amazement. And who beside Thee was the framer of such miracles? Soon didst Thou take away his life from the earth: and I remember him with less anxiety, fearing nothing for his childhood or youth, or for his whole self. We joined him with us, of equal age with us in grace, to be educated in Thy discipline; and we were baptized, and solicitude for the past life fled from us. Nor was I satiated in those days with the wonderful sweetness of considering the depth of Thy counsel for the salvation of the human race. How did I weep in Thy Hymns and Canticles, strongly moved by the voices of Thy sweetly-sounding Church! Those voices flowed into my ears and Thy truth distilled into my heart, and from it the affection of devotion boiled over, and the tears ran down, and with them, to me it was well.

VII.—15. Not long had the Milanese church begun to use this kind of consolation and exhortation, with great devotion of the brethren singing with voices and hearts. For it was surely a year, or not much more, since Justina, the mother of the boy-king Valentinian, persecuted Thy servant Ambrose for the sake of her heresy, into which she had been seduced by the Arians. The pious people kept watch in the church, ready to die with their bishop, Thy

servant. There my mother, Thy handmaid, bearing a chief part in those anxieties and vigils, was living in prayer. We, as yet cold, far from the heat of Thy Spirit, were stirred up, nevertheless, by the astonished and disturbed city. Then was it instituted that hymns and psalms should be sung, after the manner of the Eastern parts, lest the people should pine away with the weariness of grief; and from that it is retained to the present day, many already, nay, almost all Thy congregations imitating it throughout other parts of the world.

16. Then didst Thou by a vision disclose to Thy prelate before mentioned in what place lay hid the bodies of the martyrs Protatius and Gervasius, which Thou hadst concealed uncorrupted for so many years in Thy secret treasury, from whence Thou mightst bring them forth to restrain the fury of a woman, but an empress. For when, being discovered and disinterred, they had been with due honour transferred to the Ambrosian Basilica, not only those whom unclean spirits vexed (the same demons confessing themselves) were healed, but a certain well-known citizen of that city, many years blind, when he had inquired and had heard the cause of the tumultuous joy of the people, started up, and asked his guide to lead him thither. Whither being led, he asked to be allowed to touch with a napkin the bier of *the death of Thy saints, precious in Thy sight;* which, when he had done, and applied to his eyes, they were opened immediately. Thence did the fame spread; thence Thy praises glowed, shone; thence was the mind of that enemy, though not brought to the health of believing, yet restrained from the fury of persecuting. Thanks to Thee, O my God. Whence and whither hast Thou led my remem-

brance, that I should confess these great things to Thee, which, having forgotten, I had passed by? And yet then, when *the odour of Thy ointments was so fragrant*, we did not *run after Thee*. And therefore did I weep the more between the chantings of Thy hymns, formerly sighing after Thee, and at length breathing in Thee, so far as breath is allowed in this house of grass.*

VIII.—17. Thou, *who makest men to dwell of one mind in a house*, didst associate with us Euodius also, a youth of our town, who being an officer of the Court, was before us converted unto Thee, and baptized; and having relinquished secular military service, was girded for Thine. We were together; we were dwelling together with holy contentment. We were seeking what place the more useful might receive us, serving Thee, and were returning together to Africa. And when we were at Ostia-Tiber, my mother died. I omit much, because I hasten much. Accept my confessions and thanksgivings, O my God, concerning things innumerable, even in silence. But I will not pass by whatever my soul brings forth to me concerning that Thy servant who brought me forth, both in flesh, that into this temporal, and in heart, that into eternal light I might be born again. Not her gifts, but Thine in her, will I tell of. For neither had she made herself, nor educated herself. Thou didst create her; neither father nor mother knew what a one would come of them. And the rod of Thy Christ, the discipline of Thine only Son, in a faithful house, a good member of Thy Church, instructed her in Thy fear. Nor did she use to say that the diligence of her mother towards her discipline was so great as that of a certain decrepit female servant who had carried

* Quantum patet aura in domo fœnea.

her father when an infant, as little children are wont to be carried on the backs of girls a little bigger. For which reason, and on account of her age and excellent behaviour, she was duly honoured in a Christian house by its heads. Whence also the care of her master's daughters was committed to her, which she diligently discharged; and was earnest, in restraining them, when there was need, with holy severity, and in teaching, with sober prudence. For except at those hours wherein they were most moderately fed at their parents' table, she would not suffer them, even if they were parched with thirst, to drink water, guarding against an evil habit, and adding sound advice. "You drink water now, because you have not wine in your power, but when you come to have husbands, and are made mistresses of store-rooms and cellars, water will be despised, but the habit of drinking will prevail." By this method of instructing, and authority of commanding, she bridled the greediness of childhood, and shaped the very thirst of the girls to an honest measure, so that, by-and-by, what was not becoming would not be agreeable.

18. And yet there had stolen upon her, as Thy servant narrated to me her son, there had stolen upon her a love of wine. For when, as the manner was, she as a sober girl was bidden by her parents to draw wine from the vat, having lowered the cup from above where the opening is, before she poured the undiluted wine into the flagon, she sipped with the tip of her lips* a small quantity, because she was not able to take more, the sense refusing. For she did not do this through any desire of drink, but from certain overflowing excesses of her age, which boil over in

* For *labiis*, some copies read *labris*.

sportive movements, and, in girlish minds, are wont to be suppressed by the gravity of their elders. Therefore, in adding to that little, daily littles (*since he who despises little things shall fall by little and little*), she had lapsed into that habit, that now, with open mouth, she would drink little cups almost full of undiluted wine. Where was then that sagacious old woman? and that earnest prohibition? Would anything avail against a secret disease, if Thy Medicine, O Lord, were not watching over us? Father, mother, and bringers-up absent, Thou present, who createdst, who callest, who also by the men set over us doest something good for the salvation of souls; what didst Thou then, O my God? Whence didst Thou cure? Whence didst Thou heal? Didst Thou not bring forward a hard and sharp reproach from another soul, as a surgeon's knife from Thy secret store, and with one thrust didst cut off that putridity? For the handmaid with whom she used to go to the vat, quarrelling with her young mistress (as it happens) when alone together, taunted her with this crime with most bitter upbraiding, calling her wine-bibber. Smitten with this goad, she reflected upon her foulness, and straightway condemned and forsook it. As flattering friends pervert, so quarrelling enemies oftentimes correct. Nor dost Thou repay them what Thou doest through them, but what they themselves would. For she, being angry, wished to torment her young mistress, not to heal her, and hence in private, either because the place and time of the quarrel had so found them, or lest perchance she herself also should be imperilled, because she had made it known so late. But Thou, O Lord, Ruler of heavenly and earthly things, turning for Thy purposes the depths of the torrent, ordering the fluctuating turbulence

of the world, didst even out of the unhealthiness of one soul heal another, lest any one soever, when he perceives this, should ascribe it to his own power, if by any word of his, another whom he wished to be corrected is corrected.

IX.—19. Brought up, therefore, modestly and soberly, and subjected rather by Thee to her parents, than by her parents to Thee, when she became of marriageable age, being delivered to a husband, she served him as a lord, and did her best to gain him to Thee, preaching Thee unto him by those qualities wherein Thou didst make her fair, and reverently lovable and admirable unto her husband. She likewise so tolerated the injuries done to her bed, that she never had any jealousy against her husband concerning this matter. For she waited for Thy mercy upon him, that, believing in Thee, he might be made chaste. But, besides this, as he was singular in benevolence, so was he warm in anger. But she knew not to resist an angry husband, not in deed only, but not even in word. Moreover, when she saw him fit, being pacified and calm, she would show him the reason of her action, if perchance he had been more inconsiderately moved to anger; and lastly, when many matrons, whose husbands were milder, bore the vestiges of stripes even disfiguring their faces, and they, in friendly colloquy, censured the life of their husbands, she, gravely admonishing their tongues as by a jest, would say that from the time when they had heard those tablets, which are called matrimonial, recited, they ought to repute them as instruments whereby they had been made servants, therefore it did not become them, mindful of their condition, to be haughty against their lords. And when they wondered, knowing what an irascible husband she had, that it had

never been heard, nor had appeared by any token, that Patricius had beaten his wife, or that between them, even a single day, there had been any domestic quarrel, and they familiarly asked the reason, she told them her plan, which I have mentioned above. Those who did observe it, having tried it, were grateful; those who did not observe it, being subject, were troubled.

20. Her mother-in-law also, at first irritated against her by the whisperings of evil handmaids, she so overcame by compliance, persevering in endurance and gentleness, that she of her own accord discovered to her son the meddling tongues of the servants, whereby the domestic peace between herself and her daughter-in-law had been disturbed, and requested punishment. Therefore, after that he, both obeying his mother and caring for the discipline of the family, and consulting their concord, chastised with stripes those discovered, at the will of her who had discovered them, she promised that such rewards should always be looked for from herself by those who, in order to please her, should speak any evil of her daughter-in-law to her; and, none now daring, they lived together with a remarkable sweetness of good-will.

21. This great gift also didst Thou, my God, my mercy, bestow upon that Thy good servant in whose womb Thou didst create me, that between any differing and discordant individuals, wherever she was able, she showed herself such a peacemaker that when she had heard from both many most bitter things of each other (such as swelling and indigested choler is wont to belch up when to a present friend the acridity of hatreds is breathed forth in some discourse about an absent enemy), yet she discovered

nothing to the one concerning the other except that which might avail to reconcile them. This would seem to me a small good, if I, to my grief, had not known numberless persons (I know not by what horrid pestilence, most widely-spreading, of sins) not only to discover the sayings of angry enemies to angry enemies, but likewise to add things which were not said; when, on the other hand, it ought to be too little to the human mind neither to excite nor to increase the enmities of men by evil speaking, unless it have endeavoured also to extinguish them by speaking well. Such was she; Thou, the inward Master, teaching in the school of her breast.

22. Lastly, her husband also, now at the close of his temporal life, did she win to Thee, nor did she grieve over that in him, now faithful, which she had borne with in him when not a believer. She was also the servant of Thy servants; for whoever of them knew her did in her much praise and honour and love Thee, because they perceived Thy presence in her heart, the fruits of a holy conversation being witnesses. For she had been *the wife of one man*, she had rendered *mutual requital to her parents*, she had *conducted her house piously*, she had *the testimony of good works*, she had *brought up children*, so often *travailing in birth of them* as she perceived them to deviate from Thee. Lastly, to us all, O Lord, who of Thine own gift sufferest Thy servants to speak, who before her sleeping in Thee were living associated together, having received the grace of Thy baptism, did she so show care, as though she had brought forth all, so did she serve, as though she had been brought forth of all.

X.—23. And the day being near in which she was about

to depart out of this life, which day Thou knewest, we being ignorant of it, it happened (Thou, as I believe, by Thy secret methods appointing it) that she and I were standing alone, leaning at a certain window which looked into the garden of the house in which we were at Ostia-Tiber, where, removed from the crowd, after the fatigue of a long journey, we were recruiting ourselves for the voyage. We were conversing, then, together alone, very sweetly; and, *forgetting those things which were past, reaching forth unto those things which are before*, we were inquiring between ourselves, in the presence of the Truth, which Thou art, what was to be the eternal life of the saints, *which eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor into the heart of man hath ascended.* But yet we gasped with the mouth of our heart after the heavenly streams of Thy fountain, *the fountain of life*, which is *with Thee*, that being thence sprinkled, according to our capacity, we might in some way contemplate so great a matter.

24. And when our discourse was brought to that point that the highest delight of the bodily senses, in corporeal light how great soever, seemed not worthy of comparison, nor even of mention, in respect of that life, we, raising up ourselves with more ardent affection towards the SELF-SAME, traversed by degrees all corporeal things, and that heaven from whence the sun and moon and stars shine upon the earth, and further we were ascending, in inwardly thinking and speaking of Thee and admiring Thy works, and we came to our own minds, and passed beyond them that we might arrive at the region of unfailing fertility, where *Thou feedest Israel* for ever with the food of truth, and where life is the *Wisdom by whom all* these *things are made*, and what have been, and what shall be: and she is not made, but is

such as she was, and so will be always; yea, rather "to have been" and "to be about to be" are not in her, but only "to be," since that she is eternal. For "to have been" and "to be about to be" are not eternal. And whilst we were speaking, and were gasping for her, we touched her slightly with the whole force of the heart, and we sighed, and we leave there bound the *first-fruits of the Spirit;* and we returned to the sound of our mouth, where a word is both begun and ended. And what is like unto Thy Word, our Lord, *remaining in Itself*, without any past or future, *and making all things new?*

25. We were saying then, If to any one the tumult of the flesh be silent,* the images of land, and waters, and airs be silent, and the poles be silent, and the very soul be silent to itself, and pass by itself in not thinking on itself, dreams and imaginary revelations be silent, every tongue and every sign and whatever exists in passing by, if to any it be silent altogether—all these say, *We made not ourselves, but He made us who abideth for ever.* Having said these things, if now they be silent, since they have raised up our ear to Him who made them, and He alone speak, not by them, but by Himself, that we may hear His word, not by the tongue of flesh, nor by the voice of an angel, nor by the sound of a cloud, nor by the enigma of a similitude; but Him whom in these we love, Him without these we may hear, as now we stretch forth, and with rapid thought touch the Eternal Wisdom abiding over all, if this be continued, and other visions of a far different kind be withdrawn, and this one ravish and absorb, and bury its beholder in more inward joys, that eternal life may be such as was this

* Si cui sileat tumultus carnis, &c.

moment of understanding for which we sighed, is not this *Enter into the joy of thy Lord?* And this, when shall it be? Will it not be *when we all shall rise again, but we shall not all be changed?**

26. Such things were we saying, and if not in this manner and in these words, yet, O Lord, Thou knowest that in that day when we were speaking such things, and this world with all its delights (whilst we spake) was growing more contemptible to us; then said she, "Son, for my own part, I delight now in nothing in this life. What I do here yet, and why I am here I know not, hope of this world being now destroyed. One thing there was, on account of which I desired to tarry a little while in this life, that I might see thee a catholic Christian before I died. More abundantly hath my God bestowed this upon me, that (earthly felicity being contemned) I should also see thee His servant."

XI.—27. What I answered her to these things, I do not sufficiently remember. When, meanwhile, within scarce five days, or not much more, she lay down in a fever. And on a certain day, when she was ill, she fainted,† and by little and little was taken away from things present. We come about her, but soon she was restored to sense, and saw me and my brother standing by, and said to us, like, as it were, one inquiring, "Where was I?" Then looking upon us who were amazed with grief, "Here," said she, "you will lay your mother." But my brother spoke something, in which he desired as the happier that she should die not abroad but in her own country. Having heard which, she, with anxious countenance, reproving him with her eyes that

* Sed non omnes immutabimur. So the Vulgate.

† Defectum animæ passa est. "She fell into a swoon."—*Oxford Translation.*

he *savoured such things*, and thence looking at me she said, "See, what he says." And presently to both, "Lay," she said, "this body anywhere, let nothing in the care of it trouble you, only this I ask you, that at the altar of the Lord you will remember me wherever you may be;" and when she had explained this sentiment in such words as she could, she ceased, and was exercised with her increasing malady.

28. But I, considering Thy gifts, O my unseen God, which Thou puttest into the hearts of Thy faithful ones, and they thence produce admirable fruits, rejoiced and gave thanks to Thee, remembering that I had known with what great care she had been anxious about the sepulchre which she had provided and prepared for herself beside the body of her husband. For since they had lived very cordially together she had wished this also (as the human mind is not so apprehensive of Divine things) to be added to that happiness, and to have it remembered among men, that it was granted to her that after her pilgrimage beyond the seas, the united dust of both should be covered with the same earth.* But when this emptiness, through the fulness of Thy goodness, had begun not to exist in her heart, I knew not, and I was glad, admiring that it had appeared so to me, although indeed in that our discourse at the window when she said, "What do I now here?" she did not appear to desire to die in her own country. I heard also afterwards, that when we were now at Ostia she was speaking with some of my friends, in maternal confidence, on a certain day, when I myself was not present, concerning the contempt of this life, and the good of death. And when they were astonished

* Ut conjuncta terra amborum conjugum terra tegeretur.

at the courage of a woman (which Thou hadst given to her), and asked, "Whether she were not afraid to leave her body so far from her own city," she said, "Nothing is far from God, nor is it to be feared that, in the end of the world, He will not know from whence to raise me up." On the ninth day, then, of her illness, in the fifty-sixth year of her age, in the thirty-third of mine, that religious and pious soul was loosed from the body.

XII.—29. I closed her eyes; and there flowed into my heart a vast sorrow, and it overflowed in tears, and at the same time my eyes, at the violent bidding of my mind, drank up their fountain again even unto dryness, and in such a struggle it was very ill with me. And then when she breathed out her last breath, the boy Adeodatus cried out in lamentation; and, constrained by us all, held his peace. In this way also, something puerile in me which was dropping in tears, by the youthful voice of my heart was restrained and grew silent. Nor indeed did we think it becoming to celebrate that funeral with tearful lamentations and groans, for with these very often one uses to deplore certain misery of the dying, or, as it were, their extinction every way. But she neither died miserably, nor did she die altogether. This we held both by the testimony of her conduct, and *by faith unfeigned*, and by certain proofs.

30. What then was it which grievously pained me within, but a recent wound, from the habit of living together most sweetly and dearly being suddenly broken. I rejoiced indeed in her testimony, which in that very last illness itself, flattering my attentions, called me dutiful,* and mentioned with great affection of love, that she had never heard from

* Pius.

my mouth a hard or contumelious word against herself. But yet, what likeness, O my God who madest us, what comparison had the honour rendered by me to her, with the service by her to me? Since therefore I was forsaken by her so great solace, my soul was wounded, and the life was as it were torn asunder, which of hers and mine had been made one.

31. That boy, then, being restrained from weeping, Euodius took up the Psalter and began to sing the Psalm;* to which we, all the house, responded:—*Mercy and judgment will I sing unto Thee, O Lord.* But having heard what was doing, many brethren and religious women came together, and whilst they whose office it was were in the usual way taking care for the funeral, I (in a part where I could with propriety), with those who thought that I ought not to be left alone, discoursed what was fitting for the occasion, and by that fomentation of truth, I mitigated the anguish known to Thee; they not knowing, and listening intently, and thinking me to be without a sense of grief. But I, in Thine ears, when none of them heard, blamed the weakness of my feelings, and restrained the flood of grief, and it gave way to me a little, and again was borne by its own force, not to a breaking forth of tears, nor to a change of countenance; but I knew what I was pressing down in my heart. And since it very much displeased me that these human things had such power over me (which must of necessity happen in the due order and lot of our condition) with another grief, I grieved my grief, and was crushed by a double sadness.

32. Behold, when the body is borne forth, we go and

* Psalm ci.

return without tears. For neither in those prayers which we poured forth to Thee, when the Sacrifice of our ransom was offered for her, the corpse being now placed beside the sepulchre before it was interred, as it is wont there to be, neither in those prayers did I weep therefore; but all the day, in secret, I was very sorrowful, and with troubled mind I asked Thee, as I was able, that Thou wouldst heal my grief, nor didst Thou do it; I believe commending to my recollection even by this one instance, that there is a bond of every habit, even upon a mind which is not now fed with a deceptive word. It seemed good to me also to go and bathe, for I had heard whence the name was given to baths (*balneæ*), for the Greeks say βαλανεῖον because it drives anxiety from the mind. Behold this also I confess unto Thy mercy, *O Thou Father of orphans*, that since I bathed, I was the same also as before I had bathed. For neither did the bitterness of sorrow exude from my heart. Then I slept, and I awoke, and I found my grief not a little assuaged, and as I was alone in my bed, I remembered the truth-telling verses of Thine Ambrose. For Thou art

> "God, the Creator, Lord of all,
> Great Ruler of this earthly ball;
> Who clothest day with comely light,
> With kindly sleep the silent night,
> That rest may limbs relaxed restore,
> And render fit for toil once more;
> May give to weary minds release,
> And make all anxious sorrows cease."

33. And then, by little and little, I brought back to my former feeling Thy handmaid and her conversation, pious and holy towards Thee, towards us gentle and complaisant,

whereof I was suddenly left destitute, and I chose to weep in Thy sight about her and for her, about myself and for myself. And I gave vent to the tears which I was keeping back, so that they flowed as much as they would, strewing them under my heart, and I rested upon them, since Thine ears were there, not those of any human being proudly interpreting my complaining. And now, O Lord, I confess to Thee in writing. Let him read who will, and let him interpret as he will, and if he find it sin that I have wept for my mother for a small part of an hour (a mother meanwhile dead in mine eyes), who had wept for me many years, that I might live, in Thine eyes, let him not deride, but rather if he be of great charity, let him weep himself for my sins to Thee the Father of all the brethren of Thy Christ.

XIII.—34. But I now, with a heart healed from that wound in which carnal affection might be blamed, pour out to Thee, O our God, for that Thy servant a far different kind of tears, which flows from a spirit shaken by the consideration of the danger of every soul which *dieth in Adam.* Although she, being *made alive in Christ*, even not yet released from the flesh, had so lived that Thy name was praised in her faith and conduct, yet I do not dare to say that from the time when Thou didst regenerate her by baptism that no word had gone forth from her mouth against Thy commandment. And it had been said by the Truth, Thy Son, *If any one shall say to his brother, Thou fool, he shall be in danger of hell fire.* And woe be even unto the praiseworthy life of men, if, mercy being set aside, Thou shouldest examine* it. But because Thou dost not eagerly inquire after sins, we confidently hope to find with Thee

* Discutias.

some place of indulgence. But whosoever reckons up to Thee his true merits, what does he reckon up to Thee except Thy gifts? O that all men knew themselves, and that *they who glory would glory in the Lord.*

35. I, therefore, my Praise and my Life, O God of my heart (her good deeds being laid aside for a little while, for which rejoicing I give thanks unto Thee), now for the sins of my mother do beseech Thee. Hear me, through the Medicine of our wounds which hung upon the tree, and, *sitting at Thy right hand, intercedes with Thee* for us. I know that she dealt mercifully, and *from the heart forgave her debtors their debts; do Thou also forgive her her debts,* whatever she contracted through so many years after the water of salvation. Forgive, O Lord, forgive, I beseech Thee. *Enter not into judgment with her,* let mercy *be exalted over judgment,* since Thy sayings are true, and Thou hast promised *mercy* to the *merciful,* which, that they might be, Thou hast given to them, *who wilt have mercy on whom Thou wilt have mercy,* and *wilt show Thy compassion to whom Thou wilt be compassionate.*

36. And I believe that Thou hast already done what I ask Thee, but *approve, O Lord, the free-will offerings of my mouth.* For she, the day of her dissolution being nigh at hand, took no thought to have her body sumptuously covered, or to be embalmed with spices; nor desired she a choice monument, or cared for a sepulchre in her own land. Not these things did she command us, but only desired her remembrance to be made at Thy altar, which she had served, without the pretermission of a day, when she knew that holy Sacrifice to be dispensed, by which *the hand-writing that was against us has been blotted out,* by which the enemy

was triumphed over, reckoning up our faults, and seeking what to object, and *finding nothing in Him* in whom we conquer. Who will refund to Him the innocent blood? Who will restore to Him the price by which He hath bought us, that he may take us away from Him? Unto the sacrament of which our redemption Thy handmaid bound her soul with a bond of faith. Let no one break her away from Thy protection. Let not the lion and the dragon interpose himself, neither by force nor by wiles. For she will not answer that she owes nothing, lest she be convicted, and won by the crafty accuser; but she will answer that *her debts have been forgiven* by Him to whom none will repay that which, not owing, He paid for us.

37. May she be, therefore, in peace, along with her husband, before whom to none, and after whom to none, was she wedded; whom she served, *bearing fruit to Thee* with *tolerance*, that he also might be gained unto Thee. And inspire, O Lord my God, inspire Thy servants, my brethren, Thy sons, my lords, whom both by voice, and heart, and writings I serve, that so many as may read these things may remember at Thine altar Monica Thy servant, with Patricius, formerly her husband, through whose flesh Thou didst bring me into this life, after what manner I know not. May they remember with pious affection my parents in this transitory light, and my brethren under Thee the Father, in the Catholic Mother, and my fellow-citizens in the eternal Jerusalem, for which the pilgrimage of Thy people sigheth from the going out even unto the return; that that last thing which she asked of me may be made the more fruitful to her, as much through my Confessions as through my prayers.

[iv]

PRESENT-DAY PAPERS ON PROMINENT QUESTIONS IN THEOLOGY.

SOME FURTHER LETTERS OF THOMAS ERSKINE OF LINLATHEN.

SOME FURTHER LETTERS OF THOMAS ERSKINE OF LINLATHEN.

THE following letters and memoranda of Mr. Erskine are a continuation of those which appeared in our thirteenth number, and are intended as some further contributions towards, but not by any means as a substitute for, an account of his life and doctrine.

In our previous notice some errors occurred, and omissions were made, which it will be well here to notice, and to rectify as far as possible; and to give also some explanation as to one or two points in them, which seem to require explanation or enlargement.

It was an error to say that Mr. Erskine had been employed as the professional defender of Dr. Campbell at his trial: he was only there present as a friend, and one deeply interested in the matters at stake. The *professional* defender was Dr. Carlyle.

It is also discoverable from their tenor, to those familiar with his opinions and life, that there have been some misplacements made in the order of the "Letters." It is, however, extremely difficult to rectify this, as few of his letters contain the date of the year in which they were written, and it is hardly possible completely to ascertain their place.

Again, to some, who are best entitled to judge,—the relatives of the departed,—it has seemed a pity to omit the names of many mentioned in the letters, it being (as one of these well expresses it) "impossible that anything could have fallen from the pen of Mr. Erskine injurious to any one." This unquestionably is true. The names were omitted solely from motives of delicacy—a delicacy, however, which may have been misplaced, as no doubt greater point and interest would have been given to the letters had they been inserted. Some amendment has been made, therefore, in this respect in the present number.

Judging from the correspondence which has ensued on the subject, it has become evident to the Editor that the chief interest of "the letters" has been found in the passages which allude to the doctrine, as it is called, of Eternal Punishment, and the views which Mr. Erskine has been thought to hold and to express in the letters on the subject. And it seems to have been the opinion of some also, that the main object of the Editor, in the publication of the letters, was to give expression to these views. The doctrine of Eternal Punishment no doubt greatly occupied Mr. Erskine's mind, particularly in his later years; and it has its place among the subjects discussed in his correspondence. But this is not by any means the main topic of that correspondence; and it assuredly was not the chief object of its publication by the Editor. The chief characteristic of the letters and the main reason for their publication are to be found in the general elevation of their spiritual tone, and the direct approach to the Divine nature which they contain: this, and not any special doctrine, is the main

tenor of the letters, and was the cause of their being given to the public.

"Is not Mr. Erskine a man of peculiar views?" it was often asked of the Editor.—Peculiar? Yes, Mr. Erskine was peculiar. But the peculiarity was not in anything special in his views, but in himself; and it was in this, that, far above the generality of men, he was occupied with spiritual things and the search after God—His ways and meaning in Providence and His Word. He was indeed unlike most others; but it was mainly in this, that, in no canting use of the terms, "he had his conversation in heaven," and not in earthly things. But by this is not meant anything unreal or far off; no heaven merely of a future state, of pietistic expressions or ascetic ways; but that he brought the spirit of heaven into the things of earth, so that, while in all its best senses he was truly a son of Adam, he was at the same time, more than other men, a son of God.

No doubt his mind—I grieve to speak on this subject apologetically, but it may be needful to do so if the question is to be treated of merely as speculative (which, however, it was far from being with Mr. Erskine)—was greatly occupied in his later years with the doctrine, as it is called, of "Eternal Punishment," and he came to hold very decided opinions against that doctrine: its belief, as he held, involving a denial of the power and goodness of God Himself; placing a limitation, as he conceived, on the infinite extent of either. In fact he had come to hold—as a reviewer of these letters has well expressed it (*Glasgow Herald*, 13th December, 1870)—"that Eternal Punishment, or the ultimate failure of God in realizing the well-being of His creatures, was simply impossible." Mr. Erskine held

that this life was an education,—an education of the creature conducted by God Himself—and he therefore could not accept its failure as a possibility. How he met its apparent failure, as concerns so many men in this life, was by transferring and carrying on the process into another, somewhat as is taught by the Church of Rome in all her doctrine of punishment. And he put no end to the time which was to be occupied, only holding that in the end it would be successful; saying, as to the time here, If it takes thousands of years to make a piece of dead sandstone, do you suppose it possible to finish or perfect a moral and immortal spirit in threescore years and ten? and, Can God's goodness be overcome of evil? How he dealt with the formidable question, "If life be an education, and this world a school, why does a benevolent and all-powerful Creator not choose means more immediately efficacious than the course of this world?" I do not know. This aspect of the difficulty is so fully expressed, and so much better than it can be by myself, by one eminently qualified to furnish and weigh all sides of such a question—the present distinguished Bishop of St. David's—that I venture (with his leave) to state it in his words:—

"I read Mr. Erskine's letters with great delight, and found them highly interesting and suggestive; and I therefore wish to be included in the number of those—and I have no doubt they are many—who very much desire to see more of them. I desire this the more because I should hope that other letters or sayings may clear up some points which I have found obscure in these. For while my ethical sympathy has been always with him, I

have been perplexed by several of his doctrinal statements, and felt sure that I could not have comprehended their full meaning. I could not help thinking that some of them are grounded rather on his own personal experience, than on general observation of the history of mankind. In the work of salvation his words sound to me as if he made man's part so large, as to leave comparatively little to God. And yet from other passages I should conclude that nothing could be farther from his real meaning. But he dwells much on the impossibility of man being made good, and on all our goodness consisting in *choosing to be good:* and he insists strongly on the distinction between the view of life as a state of probation, and as a school of education—designed to prepare *all* for final perfection and bliss. He says, indeed, 'I don't deny that there is a trial and probation throughout man's whole life—*but the trial is subservient to the education.*' He does not seem to have observed that every school is essentially a trial. Some, who *choose to be good,* come out, like himself, with the happy experience that it has worked well with them, that they have been growing better and better, riper in judgment, purer in heart, as long as they lived. But with how many is the case quite the reverse! How many are growing worse and worse, more and more hardened, blinded, and depraved, the longer they live! With these—no doubt through their own fault—God's schooling has hitherto failed. But then what prospect is there for such as these in a future progress toward universal restoration? *God cannot make them good.* All He can do is to remove them into another school, which may fit them better. But must He not know which fits every one best? And is their education to begin entirely *de novo,*

and not to bring into the second school the habits and character which they have formed in the first? And if so, with what hope of a better result? I should like very much to know how you think Mr. Erskine would have answered these questions, and still more, if he actually has answered them, either directly or indirectly, to see how he has done it."

What Mr. Erskine would have exactly answered to this I have no means of knowing. The question is not dealt with in his printed works or letters, and I cannot recall ever having had any conversation with him on this aspect of the subject. I think that he would have felt, however, that the dilemma involved an accusation of the Creator greater than was possible to bear if we hold to the belief of an Almighty and Beneficent Creator; and that the view of life as an education was a deliverance to him from the Atheism which the aspects of this life without that conception would involve. But I do not think that he held the view of life being an education merely as an escape from a difficulty, but that the belief commended itself to him as true both from what he observed of it and also from the fitness and necessity of the conception. For he thought that all learnt here somewhat which was necessary to be learnt, and which could not be learnt in any other way; but that some such training was inevitable, for a free and moral intelligence, which could not be produced by fiat, but only by training and experience; and that the conception was both a guide to, and an interpreter of, the mysteries of life and providence. Mr. Erskine started from the basis of a belief in a personal Providence, of which the fundamental characteristic is

Holy Love. He recognised gradations in being: that matter is inferior to mind, and mind to morals. The fact of the existence of morals involved to him the necessity of a Personal and Living Source. It was here that he came upon a personal God, and the unanswerable proof of His existence and character. Finding here the existence and nature of the Most High, he believed that He was directing all things to good ends, worthy of, and satisfactory to, Himself and His creation. His necessary character involved, he conceived, the necessary well-being of creation. He did not believe that this was accomplished if any of His little ones perished, or His sheep, if "lost," were not again "found." He could not imagine a creature in eternal punishment saying, "Can or will you do no better for me than this?" The power of putting such a question as "Why hast Thou made me thus?" involved, he felt, the possibility and the assurance of an answer satisfactory to one to whom the Creator had given the power of putting it; whom He had in this constituted as judge; and to whom, if no proper answer could be given, no power of such sitting in judgment would have been given. But in the general feeling that righteousness demands the punishment of the guilty Mr. Erskine fully concurred. In fact, no one more strongly than he repudiated the idea of the abolition of penalty for transgression. But then he believed that punishment was remedial, and that punishment for sin was involved in the eternal nature of things: that a due retribution should be awarded to those who had produced mischief and misery on earth he rejoiced to think; but he was convinced that the punishment would be such as was best suited, both as being real and yet healing. He did not

think it was one of eternal suffering from which there might be many moral or immoral refuges, but one from which there could be no escape, and yet one at the same time painful and curative. This he conceived was to be effected by an increase of tenderness of heart, seeing in its true light the misery sin had caused, so that in time to come it would occur no more. Evil, he held, was to be destroyed, but could only be destroyed by being overcome of good; and any course, therefore, was only adequate as it achieved this object, which he held could only be done by arousing the spiritual nature and allowing it to see, in the light of bitter sorrow, the sufferings of those whom it had pierced. But Mr. Erskine held that Eternal Punishment and its kindred questions—while to him they had become all in all so far as their true understanding involved the very character of God, and so his own confidence in Him and peace—yet were not to be approached as postulates, but received as conclusions, not derived from mere logic or the force of intellect, but questions only to be read and solved in the light of Holy Love. Love in this, he thought, alone could rule a true conclusion. No doubt mankind at large desire that the salvation of all were possible, and most theologians agree that it is the will and desire of God that all men should be saved. It is surely a righteous and loving desire on the part of man. But it is not credible that the creature could conceive a better conception than its Creator; while, if it be the desire of the Creator, it seems incredible that the Omniscient and Almighty should desire that which is impossible; therefore the desire must have its fulfilment, and must be accomplished "in due time," that is, when man's education shall

have been completed. Mr. Erskine found little difficulty from Revelation in coming to this conclusion. If he found certain passages of Holy Scripture which seemed to favour one conclusion, he at the same time found others to favour an opposite; and he drew the inference from the general tenor of Scripture that the victory would be with Good and not with Evil; or, in the words of St. Paul, "that God should be all in all." He thought that to show this was the main object of St. Paul, in his own favourite Epistle, on which he had so fully treated in his printed works, the Epistle to the Romans; and he felt that it was the true and legitimate end to the Saviour's work, just in proportion as he identified Him with the Father.

Looking on the moral laws of God, not as arbitrary enactments, but as indications of that which God Himself is, and on His commandments to men as declarations, either of that which is in the eternal nature of things and of that which God accepts for Himself, or else of that which He has caused and made for all and by which he Himself is ruled, adherence to which is victory and life, as violation of them is defeat and death, Mr. Erskine took these rules into the region of the eternal providence of God, and saw in them a pledge and prophecy of final salvation, and the perfecting of all things, and, above all, of him who is born in the image, and is capable of the likeness, of God. Every man, he held, is by birth as much the son of God as another, the son of God as the son of man. He did not suppose the kingdom to include some and not others; from the love within himself he knew that the Eternal Love beyond could not be satisfied with this. If he who was evil desired good gifts for his children, and accomplished them so far as in his power,

how much more the Heavenly and All-perfect Father? No doubt in this he used the express language of our Lord, and, let us believe and hope, drew no false conclusions.

The brief memoranda of Mr. Erskine's conversations and sayings which follow the letters are quite inadequate to give any true conception of the speaker apart from that genial and holy presence, whose aspect and bearing gave that power and meaning to their utterance without which they are in truth but dull and leaden letter; still, they may recall the speaker himself to some, and enable others to follow on the path which they indicate, until they themselves come to something of that which he who spoke partook of in its fulness—a nature in its essence truly divine—a nature to which, after a long course of direction, experience, waiting service, and search, he, by the Divine grace, had at last attained.

Mr. Erskine's chief spiritual strength lay, I believe, in a deep sympathetic insight, which enabled him to see and apply to use the spiritual knowledge which he himself possessed. He had this in a remarkable degree, so that it was difficult in many cases to realize that he had reached his object, as it were, immediately and by intuition, and not by study and preparation, which, in many cases, it was evidently impossible that he could have had. I remember a case which will explain better, perhaps, what I mean than any lengthened detail. It was given me by one of his oldest friends, the late Lady Matilda Maxwell * of Polloc. He often used to stay at Polloc, having much interest in Lady Matilda, and being a great admirer of her character and of her husband's, the late Sir John Maxwell; as who was not who had the necessary discernment, and the privi-

* Second daughter of the seventh Earl of Elgin.

lege of entrance into their society? Polloc! to how many hearts, even now, will not its memory arise as that, alas! of a fountain sealed, and a garden closed; a garden whence the flowers are "all wede away;" a fountain of which the channel is dry! He, no doubt, to whom it now has passed * cherishes its walls, and hallows the ground where so many near and dear to himself used to tread. But who can recall the dead, or people a place with the departed? We hear their voices in the night, and their footsteps on the stairs; we catch dim visions of them in their distant walks, and in the woods where we used to see and hear them. But when the day dawns, or we draw nearer, we find it was but the coursing of our own blood, and the throbbing of our own eyes, which had reproduced in the familiar places the sight and sounds to which they were there accustomed.

Dear Sir John! We recall his tall form and chivalrous bearing, his abhorrence of the low and mean, his generous and loving heart. How much poorer the world has become since he left it! And Lady Matilda, with her deep spiritual insight and force of character, her large and practical benevolence, and apprehension of goodness and genius revealing goodness and genius in herself, one of a race whose members seem all endowed with talent and conduct,—who that knew her does not feel that the loss of so much light and love, and the withdrawal of a home which was the rendezvous of so many of the pure and noble of every class, is a loss which is irreparable on this side of the grave? For although there be very many delightful residences in Scotland, and much delightful society, yet I can recall none which combine the

* Sir John's nephew, the accomplished and talented Sir William Stirling Maxwell of Keir and Polloc.

charms of Polloc. There, particularly in his later days, Mr. Erskine was frequently to be found, more especially when, after Lady Matilda's death, Sir John was left in much bodily suffering to fight the battle of life alone—a battle which he fought bravely to the last. Sir John himself was no common man; his often original conceptions had in them something of the flavour of genius; few men were of a more reverential nature, yet few men being so had expressions more unusual or quaint—and how entirely they recall himself! I remember one day, after a nearly two months' visit to Polloc, where we had been all detained, partly by a snowstorm, but mainly by the charms of the place—Mr. Erskine, the late Mr. E. S. Cayley, then one of the Members for the East Riding of Yorkshire, one of Sir John's earliest friends, who had sat with him on the same form at Westminster school (where they contracted with the late Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr. Longley, and the late Marquis of Westminster, a friendship which endured to the last), and who later on had been with Sir John at Christ Church, Oxford, and finally had served with him through many years of Parliament—I well remember as we took leave, and were in the carriage to go, Sir John came to the door, not quite pleased, and said, "Will you all leave me here alone like the bird mentioned as sitting on the house top?—not, however," he added, as he turned away, "without value in high quarters." Dear Sir John! the soul of honour, chivalry, and benevolence, how many arose in your daily walk to call you blessed!

Some years ere her death I remember Lady Matilda telling me the following anecdote of Mr. Erskine, which I think is a remarkable example of the use to which his

spiritual powers could be, and were, as I think, often exhibited to most advantage. To some his theology may seem speculative. To myself I can only say that it was the most real and efficacious in its operation of any theology with which I have been conversant. Lady Matilda had been in the habit of going to see a sick person (I think a tenant farmer upon the estate, but in this I may be mistaken), who was dying, but who would not believe that he was even in a dangerous way, and had a great dislike to any allusion to the subject. The parish clergyman had seen him, and Lady Matilda had done her best, for all were interested in him, but without effect. One day she persuaded Mr. Erskine to go with her to see him, who excused himself by saying he was no clergyman, and might not be welcome, but afterwards was persuaded, and went. On entering, Mr. Erskine, with some want of his usual discrimination, began on the subject of death and the danger of the patient, who turned round upon him, asked what business that was of his; "and besides" (said he) "what do you know about dying, were you ever dead?" Mr. Erskine was taken aback, and thought it wisest, at all events at that moment, to pursue the subject no further; but not liking to take his leave in an unfriendly or uncourteous manner, he sat down by the bedside, and began talking to the patient about country affairs, with which both of them were conversant, and became so engrossed that they forgot the time, and were only stopped by remembering that they were detaining Lady Matilda too long. Mr. Erskine rose up to go, but ere going, smitten by his compassionate nature, he turned back to sit down again while he said, "My dear friend, I am very sorry to say it, but I cannot

leave you without telling you truly that you *are* going to die, and that you should prepare for it. The doctor told me that there was no hope of your recovery." Hearing this, the poor man was greatly overcome, and burst into tears, saying, "I am sure you mean me well, for I see now you are my friend; but what can I do? I cannot face the idea of dying;" and with this he grew so excited, that, also overcome, Mr. Erskine said, "Would you like me to go with you?" To this the man replied, "O now, sir, you are beginning again as you did at first, and I carena what you say; how can a man go with another when he is dying?" To this Mr. Erskine replied nothing. But as the patient grew more excited he resumed, "But *would* you like me to go with you? Would you like it if I *could?*" "Of course I would," said the man. "Why?" said Mr. Erskine. "Oh, because now that we are such friends, I am sure that you wouldna let anything very bad happen to me." To this said Mr. Erskine, "Do you think then that I am better than God?" The man was silent, and Mr. Erskine repeated, "Do you think that I am better than God? Anything which you like in me comes out of Him, for I did not make myself; depend upon it He is better than I am, and likes you better too; depend upon it that *He* will not let anything very bad happen to you. Believe me, it will not be so bad as you think; believe me, it will be easier; just put it into His hands, just leave yourself with Him, and I am sure that He will see you through it better than I could, better than you think; just lay it on Him to carry through, and leave it with Him, and I am sure He will make it easy for you." To this the man then answered nothing, and they went their way. But next day,

or soon afterwards, a message came to Polloc to say that "he would like to see that gentleman again." Mr. Erskine then returned; and on his entrance the farmer said, "I have been thinking, sir, of what you said, and I find something in it, and I am trying to lift it from myself and put it upon God, and I feel a kind of help in it." By-and-by, some days after—for after this he saw Mr. Erskine almost daily until he died—he rose from "chancing" it with God to confiding it to Him, and finally passed out of life, not only having overcome the dread of death which had been so great a trial to him, but able to look forward to it with hope, and even with triumph—all of which seemed owing to what might be called (although improperly) a chance expression of Mr. Erskine's, but which was, in truth, the realization by him of that which his own spiritual nature told him was both the sick man's need, and would be his supply.

I remember a story of a similar nature, which evinces the same power of dealing with spiritual need by the application of his own spiritual experience to the affairs of daily life. A friend of his had a gardener whom he occasionally went to see, a rough and brutal man, who was in the habit of treating badly an invalid wife, grudging her remedies, and on one occasion saying rudely to Mr. Erskine, "But what is the use of so many blisters?" To which Mr. Erskine replied, "To draw the heat to the outside; and," he added, "I think, Robert, that one of these days you will be getting a blister yourself." The man said nothing, but that he was quite well, and that there was no fear of that. Some time after, however, he fell and broke his leg when tipsy, and for a long time suffered excruciating pain, which, however, had a

wonderful effect in softening his temper and character. Mr. Erskine, seeing him in this state, could not help remarking it, and congratulating him upon his improvement in patience and forbearance. "Oh," said he, "Mr. Erskine, but I have had my blister." Mr. Erskine asking what he meant, he recalled the story, which Mr. Erskine had forgotten. But he said, "I never forgot it, although I did not understand it then; now I understand it, and it is all right and true."

Another story strikes me as characteristic, although in another aspect of character—his assured conviction that, did they stand at the same point of spiritual view, opposite parties would agree; for which end his loving boldness was remarkable. Mr. Woodward, the former chaplain at Rome, a High Churchman, but one capable of sympathizing with all genuine aspects of religion, asked me once, in Rome, if I knew Mr. Erskine? I said "Yes, very well." "The most charming man," he said, "I ever met. I shall never forget his power of conviction. I remember one evening, when I had some people here, and we were talking on religious subjects, that a good sort of man, rector of —— College, in Rome, said 'it was a blessing we had not to deal with a hard master in God, but one who did not require much from us.' 'You are mistaken there,' said Mr. Erskine, crossing the room to him, but smiling as he spoke, 'God *is* a hard master, for He demands all that you have.' The speaker did not answer him for a little, but at last said, 'I think you are right, Mr. Erskine, for He must take all we have if we are to be filled with all the fulness of God.'"

But there was another aspect of Mr. Erskine's mind which would have made him one of the most delicate wits and

satirists of the day in the Talleyrand fashion, which kills while it does not seem to touch, had he yielded to it. I remember being witness of an instance of it myself. He and I had got into the carriage on a very cold day, at the door of the house of Polloc, and were waiting for a clerical companion, who, being rather hipped about his health, took (as Mr. Erskine and I thought) an unconscionably long time in wrapping himself up in the hall ere he joined us. When he came out at last, Mr. Erskine said, but very gently, "Bless me, Mr. ——, you take as much care of yourself as if you were taking care of some other person." But these powers of sarcasm he all but never used. One other reminiscence of this character of power, however, occurs to me, and with it I must conclude these short memorials. There was no personal feeling in this; but it had the effect of ending a discussion which was becoming personal among others. It was at a dinner party, where the character of that which ought to be the object of the pulpit was discussed; one gentleman saying, with warmth, that as for him, "he went to church to hear good arguments." "Arguments," said Mr. Erskine, "about what?" and the discussion was ended.

Longer as these memoranda have been than I intended, I cannot conclude them without alluding to some to whom Mr. Erskine owed so much of the peace and happiness of his home—his sisters, Mrs. Patterson and Mrs. Charles Stirling. The first had, although I knew her not sufficiently to experience its value in the fullest sense, all the greater qualities of her beloved brother; and for many years Mrs. Charles Stirling was "the angel in the house" of Thomas Erskine of Linlathen. Who that knew that house does not associate it with some loving memory of Mrs. Stirling? She kept her brother in the

routine and practical ways of life without friction or disturbance throughout all the details of a large administration and requirement. "Julius Cæsar,"—as we used to call her, from her undisputed but all-gentle sway,—how sweet is her memory, and little its association with a name which was merely used as *lucus a non lucendo* from a story which, when they heard it, had greatly amused her and Mr. Erskine. It was this:—A laird of the neighbourhood, greatly "henpecked," but ashamed to own it, was sitting up too late with a party in his house, when one of his guests said, "Mr. ——, is it not time for us to go to bed; what will Mrs. —— say?" "I would like you to know, gentlemen," said the laird, "that I am Julius Cæsar in my own house." Whereon, the door gently opening, a beckoning finger was put in, followed by a female night-cap, and a head which said, "Come ye awa', Julius Cæsar; come ye awa' up to your bed." Dear Mrs. Stirling, how little her beautiful countenance, heavenly smile and manners had anything of Julius Cæsar! But the idea of her being thought to have, amused her and Mr. Erskine, and was a frequent subject of quiet merriment between them and myself. And now all of them are gone from us here, but are united where now they are, and as much or more to one another, if that be possible, than they were here.

The leading characteristic of Mr. Erskine's mind was a loving righteousness. Love which believed that the more it knew the more reason would there be for faith and confidence in God, the Eternal Love and Righteousness. Mr. Erskine did not believe ignorance, but knowledge, to be the mother of true faith. If the knowledge lay beyond his reach, as in the causes of many of God's providential

dealings, then he rested on the conviction that, however strange, and even contradictory, they may sometimes appear to us, still in these God ever is acting in accordance with His own nature, that "He cannot deny Himself," that this nature is righteous love, and that this will be testified in due time. In this belief he rested and had peace. And, in truth, if this be not a sure resting-place and a sound conclusion, there is no refuge for us but blank Atheism—a refuge in which, alas, many, and in increasing numbers, have found their last conclusion.

The Calvinism of nature, as it has been called, is no doubt real and apparent, as far as things seen are concerned; and religions which are based on its foundation find in it their best arguments and defence. But Mr. Erskine rose above this conclusion by his belief not on that which is seen, but on that which is unseen yet more real—the unseen evidence of the heart. He did not hold, with Mr. Tennyson, that "knowledge is of things we see;" although it is probable that by this Mr. Tennyson did not allude to the higher knowledge. In point of fact, Mr. Erskine had little sympathy with the outward and visible signs of nature, or in those aspects of nature which are now supposed of most importance in many circles. He had little interest in these aspects of nature, deeming nature to be no more than apparatus. "I am much more sure," he used to say, "of my own being, than of that being a table; indeed, I do not know that it is a table at all, nor what it is; but I am sure of myself, and that this is me. The soul of man is of more value than all the material worlds, and for this reason, that they are unconscious of themselves, while the soul is conscious both of them and of itself also." A remark

which had been made before, however, by Pascal, in his "Pensées."

And now I must say farewell to Mr. Erskine. But there can be no farewell to one with whom the greater part of one's memories are bound up, and to whom one owes so great a part of that which is best within oneself. "Dear heavenly friend that canst not die!"

If man cannot on earth attain to God so as to see Him, in a divine man we have some similitude of God; in The Divine Man His entire image; but also of Him (though lesser) we have likenesses in His children. One of these has just been taken from us in Thomas Erskine. His loss to us is great; to himself his going is no doubt gain. He needed rest, and surely his rest is sweet in the bosom of that Father whom he "had learnt here," "by whom he lived here," and cannot lose elsewhere. We may not mar the haven of his repose, nor ask for him that which He whom we would ask is more ready to give than we to ask, and who has already given to him that which we would ask. Not doubting this, but only as in communion with the Spirit of the Father in whose bosom he now is, and who has pleasure in the prosperity of His servant—that Father whose grace it is which ever acts, while yet He claims the concurrence and desires of His children in His actions,—thinking of our friend, we look to Him, and say, "Requiem æternam dona ei Domine; et lux perpetua luceat ei."

ALEXANDER EWING, D.C.L.,
Bishop of Argyll and the Isles.

PALERMO, January 1, 1871.

LETTERS TO THE BISHOP OF ARGYLL.

CHRIST THE REVELATION OF THE FATHER.

11, Great Stuart Street, Edinburgh, December, 1865.

DEAR BISHOP,—

How soon do men in this dying world of ours find themselves solitary survivors of an extinct circle of society! You and I are now the only surviving partners of Maxwell, Cayley, and Co. We probably knew them in a way that nobody else did. Those two are now in the other world, having impressed upon us, by the very fact of their departure hence, that true wisdom consists in occupying ourselves with our eternal relations, and not with those which pass away.

I return you Mr. Campbell's letter, which, as you say, is a help onwards on our voyage. I wish the principle of it were more generally known—the principle of the self-evidencing nature of light. I must learn to know God's character, and His relation to me in Jesus Christ, as necessary truths, independent of any authority whatever. What Mr. —— says of an awakened spirit finding life in statements which it never doubted, but which were before that new stirring entirely inoperative, is very striking. I am thankful for any measure of that self-evidencing light which

has been vouchsafed to me; but I feel that I need a great deal more. I desire to have a more vivid sense of the Fatherly care and love of God, so that I may be able to say with Jacob Boehmen, that as the element of the fowl is the air, so the heart of God is my element—the element in which I ever live. Jesus came *to reveal the Father*. And all that He says of Himself is really to serve this purpose. "He that hath seen Me, hath seen the Father." He is both the measure of the Father's love and the manner and purpose of it. "God so loved the world as to give Him," and He gave Him, that we in Him might have the very substance of sonship.

My eyes are fast closing up in cataract, and so are my sister's. I trust that the inward light will lighten my darkness.

Ever affectionately yours,

T. ERSKINE.

THE REV. ALEXANDER SCOTT.

11, Great Stuart Street, January 19, 1866

MY DEAR FRIEND,—

Scott is dead. A very remarkable man, of great intelligence, wonderful powers of thinking and perceiving and uttering, and a noble character—on the whole, perhaps, the most impressive man I ever knew—full of every variety of knowledge, of taste, of humour.

As to your object, I find myself very ill-qualified to explain my own thoughts; but yet I must do it in some directions before I die. I expect to be blind in the course of a few months; and I wish to say one or two things about the personality of God, and the meaning of Jesus Christ the Son of God, before the light fails me.

Young R——'s death has produced much feeling here, and his mother is desolate and emptied. I trust that God may fill her heart. Yours affectionately,

T. ERSKINE.

"ABIDE IN ME."

11, Great Stuart Street, January 26, 1866.

MY DEAR BISHOP,—

I can speak some things occasionally; but when I write, I find that I get into repetitions and commonplaces. However, if I can get up anything by March, that I think might help your undertaking, I shall rejoice to be a fellow-worker.

We have had an unusual number of deaths among our friends lately. It is coming very near me now; and it is a wonderful thing to think of and realize. All men go through it, but not one in a million appear to look it in the face, and to know what it is. "Abide in me, and I in you," is the guiding word—teaching us to find rest unto our souls. Yours affectionately,

T. ERSKINE.

PRESENT-DAY PAPERS.

11, Great Stuart Street, February 6, 1866.

MY BELOVED BISHOP,—

I have seen your prospectus, and I must express my deep feeling of affection and sympathy which your last letters have called forth. I rejoice to know that so many seek first the kingdom of God, and I am most thankful to any one who has a love for myself.

I feel myself unworthy in many ways—chiefly in the highest matters. It is humbling to think that I have known so much of the truth of God for so many years, and that I remain so little influenced by it. As to the matter of intelligence, if you knew the difficulty that I sometimes have in making a sentence hang together, you would feel that it is not right nor reasonable to expect help from me. I am unwilling for love's sake, and because I know it would grieve you, to put out my name. At any rate, I could not furnish you with an article to my own satisfaction for a long time to come. Indeed, I must add that my name cannot appear. You have no idea of the weight that such a responsibility would throw upon my nervous system.

Ever affectionately yours,

T. ERSKINE.

"PROGRESSIVE LIGHT"—"ECCE HOMO."

11, Great Stuart Street, March 8, 1866.

MY DEAR BISHOP,—

I have been in communication with Carlyle lately, and I am just returning to him a letter from —— to himself on the subject of Frederick, which he has sent to me to read. It is a capital letter, expressing the greatest admiration for Carlyle's style of thought, his free and easy treatment of his hero, and all other men and things in the world —his perpetual banter of scoff without either sneer or bitterness. Certainly there never was a history in the world written like it. He is coming to Edinburgh soon, to give his address to the young students, who have elected him Rector of the University. This is to him a very burden-

some duty, and he upbraids himself for having allowed himself to be put in nomination for the office. He has written an enormous quantity, and of a quality, too, which indicates great power and fertility. Jowett has been here, and is gone back. He, too, in his way, is a remarkable man. Both have influenced the minds of men—Carlyle very largely, Jowett more circumscribedly; but his subjects are important members of society—the future lawyers and clergy of England.

I feel that, if Christianity is to stand in this country, it must be shown to be consistent with reason. The chief difficulty consists in the existing Confessions of Faith and Articles to which the clergy feel themselves bound. This is a great evil; but we can scarcely look for any deliverance from it, because the clerical body could never agree among themselves as to the changes which should be made on these symbols. There is not a man, either in the Church of England or Scotland, who would not wish many things changed in their respective formularies; but they could not agree what the changes should be, and so they must be content to keep things as they are. That speech of Fitzjames Stephen, in the case of the "Essays and Reviews," was a great revealer of secrets and a great breaker of fetters; but still scrupulous men and ignorant men, who like authority, and dare not go beyond it, will not use that liberty. A trial of a similar kind in Scotland might do for the Westminster Confession something like what Stephen did for the Thirty-nine Articles. The "Ecce Homo" is a very remarkable book, and will probably lead to many further thoughts.

For myself, I am in the slough of despond as far as

regards my own writing. I sometimes wish I had a shorthand writer, who could take down what I say in a conversation with such men as I have been lately talking to. I cannot dictate, and I find that the idea of writing *for printing* kills the life of my thoughts. I hope, however, to get something soon; but it is not good economy to save time at the expense of the goodness and completeness of the production.

If the "Ecce Homo" comes in your way, you will find much truth and practical wisdom in the chapter on the "Enthusiasm of Humanity."

Ever affectionately yours,

T. ERSKINE

BISHOP COLENSO.

11, Great Stuart Street, April 19, 1866.

VESCOVO CARISSIMO,—

I am glad that you have not joined the cry and the anathema against Colenso, and at the same time that you have not withheld your dissent from his doings. He has not always been so reverent as he ought to have been in taking the liberties which his theories led him to take. His suggestion that Samuel *invented the story* of the burning bush, to give a reason for introducing the new name (Jehovah), is not in good taste.

What you say of letters being Minié rifles in comparison to the Armstrong guns of books is very good. I believe that it would have been well for me, and for my peace of mind and composure, had I kept to that sort of practice. When I get into larger things, I find myself lost in the

endeavour to preserve sequence and unity. An essay on the art of patch-work might be a great help to people like me, who really cannot weave a whole web. The letter which you enclosed is very gratifying. Labouring, as I generally do, under a great sense of uselessness, such notices are sunbeams, and calls to thank God and take courage.

Carlyle's visit was very pleasant, and his revised Address is really excellent.

Yes! the Cayley days were pleasant days; and you and I are left alone of the firm!

Very truly yours,

T. ERSKINE.

INTELLECTUAL FORMS NOT "WALKING WITH GOD."

Linlathen, June 1, 1866.

MY DEAR BISHOP,—

I am engaged in writing, and have been so during the winter, but to very little purpose; and I feel self-condemned in occupying my mind in the labour of constructing the intellectual forms of religious thought, when I could be so much more profitably employed in actually walking with God continually in the spirit. It seems to me that there is a call on me for this, which I ought not to disregard.

What I have been writing, however, I should say, is not for your book. It must stand by itself. But I hope to find something already in manuscript that may suit you.

Yours ever truly,

T. ERSKINE.

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS.

16, Charlotte Square, November 28, 1866.

VESCOVO DELECTISSIMO,—

You have written me an excellent letter, and very like yourself. I have scarcely any man now who writes me letters like himself; most letters are not like men at all, but are like other letters.

I see as yet but small prospect of *my book* coming out; and yet, although it is in some sort a weariness, it is a continual interest to me, and a continual awakening of new thoughts. I am at this moment occupied with the first chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, 16th and 17th verses, which in the authorized version are utterly unintelligible, and even in the original are obscure enough. The chief light upon them lies in the quotation from Habakkuk. I believe that the whole of that prophecy is the true explanation of St. Paul's obscure words; and that prophecy is an assurance that God will finally triumph over evil, and that Chaldean invasions, and all other calamities and punishments, will be made to contribute towards this blessed end. It is the revelation of this purpose of God that makes the Gospel the power of God unto salvation. As the whole matter stands in our Bible, the 17th verse is a woeful falling off from the 16th.

It seems to me a disgrace to our country that this passage should stand as it does in the book, mocking at St. Paul's boast, and charging "the power of God" with imbecility.

Mrs. Stirling has not been very well. I hope that she may soon be restored. Vours very truly,

T. ERSKINE.

God's Love and our Love.*

16, Charlotte Square, January 10, 1867.

Dear Friend,—

Do not interpret my silence into indifference, or an undervaluing of human sympathy. I feel most thankful for it; chiefly, perhaps, because I always find in it a help to realize God's sympathy. He gives us specimens of human love, that we may learn to understand His love. "Can a woman forget her sucking child?" Who that comprehends the love of a parent can doubt that God is a Father, and that He is revealing Himself in every family through that relation? The Bible would be a very meaningless book to us if there were no family ties in the life of man.

I am a real mourner, and expect to mourn all my remaining days; but I have real consolations. God has been good to me. Blessed be His holy name!

So you are on your way to Palermo, and alone too. Well! the Lord be with you, and enlighten and strengthen you! I shall be glad to hear from you after you have reached your destination.

Ever affectionately yours,

T. Erskine.

God's Love and Righteousness.

16, Charlotte Square, March 2, 1867.

My dear Bishop,—

I hope that Palermo is agreeing with you, and that you are going on well—both extra and intra—quoad corpus et spiritum. We have had an unusual amount of death in

* On the death of his sister.

our circle within the last few months,—remembrances that this is not our rest nor our portion. What a blessed thing it is *to rejoice in God!* Our common theology does not even contemplate this; all that it aims at, is to look at God without terror, as an appeased judge. And yet it must require something beyond that to produce love—love, the living, quickening principle of our moral being. We cannot love God on the mere ground that He will not punish us. We must know that *He loves us*, and that He does so independently of all our ill deserts, and will continue to do so until He has subdued our unlovingness.

I find myself always falling back on the assurance that the inextinguishable purpose of God towards us is to make us *partakers of His own righteousness*. This is the truest description of *love*, the *self-communicating* principle—the longing for sympathy, giving and receiving, in the highest sphere. Thus love and righteousness are seen to be one and the same thing. The righteous father desires, and must for ever desire, the righteousness of his children; thus the righteousness of God, which Calvinism makes the enemy of man, is really his truest and fastest friend. I have a great love for the eighth verse of the twenty-fifth Psalm. In other places we have declarations of what God does for those that trust in Him and fear Him; but *here* the object of his care is *the sinner*. And what a treasure is contained in the last six verses of the fifth chapter of St. Matthew, where the *perfection* of God is made to consist in loving the evil and the unjust!

I dare say that number of the *Spectator* in which your Charge is lauded has been sent out to you. I am glad

that such thoughts are put forth under episcopal authority, as more important than any ecclesiasticism. What a proclivity towards ecclesiasticism there seems to be in the minds of men, and specially in the Church of England! I should not wonder that in half a century it returns to *the old things.*

Give my kindest regards to "Ea." I hope she is well and flourishing. My own sister looks often as if she were about to depart. But she has real joy in God.

Ever affectionately yours,

T. ERSKINE.

Here should follow some other letters; but they are omitted as they form part of a correspondence between the Bishop of St. David's, Dr. Macleod Campbell, and the Editor, on the use of the word "reconciliation" in the Lambeth Encyclical, which, it is trusted, may form a future number of these "Papers."

MR. MAURICE.

2, Forres Street, Edinburgh, February 6, 1868.

VESCOVO CARISSIMO,—

I have had a most fraternal visit from Mr. Maurice, who came from London simply to see me, notwithstanding my unworthiness. "If ye then being evil, ... how much more will your Father, who is good," &c.

I hope, if you are going anywhere to escape the spring, that you will pass through Edinburgh, and give me a sight of you.

What a terrible judgment on the land this Fenianism is! Its root so deep and so undiscoverable! England has never known such a calamity. My affectionate regards to —— —— and Mr. Crum. "The Lord is our light and our salvation."

Yours most truly,

T. ERSKINE.

FILIAL TRUST IN GOD.

2, Forres Street, February 28.

MY DEAR BISHOP,—

I have read your letter with perfect sympathy. I believe that filial trust is our true righteousness, and that *it* is founded, and can only be founded, on the fact that we are sons of God by birth, being originally created in the Son. But until we know this fact we cannot have that trust which is our righteousness, our right state in relation to God and all His creatures.

Mr. Macleod Campbell has come to Edinburgh to give me some of his edifying conversation and companionship, and I have felt him most profitable. At the same time I feel that no human being can help us but just in so far as he does so to get nearer to God, and to learn the secret of abiding in the spirit of the Son—that filial *trust* for which we were made—which also is the spirit of prayer, and in which we both know that we are heard and answered.

Ever affectionately yours,

T. ERSKINE.

CLERICAL FAMILIARITY.

2, Forres Street, March 6.

MY DEAR BISHOP,—

Mrs. Erskine* has gone to join the great assembly above. She is one who has always had a place in my life; and she has been a faithful follower of the Lord in word and in deed, bearing witness to His love and righteousness.

I have had a friend staying with me for a few days—a clergyman from near the Land's End—a very good man, who would be a great addition to our Scotch Episcopalianism. I have heard him preach two very excellent discourses in St. John's, which made me wish that I had the opportunity of hearing him oftener.

There is, doubtless, a special temptation attached to the office of a preacher, namely, that of getting used to handle sacred things without feeling.

Dear friend, let us seek to keep very near Him, living in the spirit of prayer. My love to you and —— ——.

T. ERSKINE.

EARLY IMPRESSIONS.

I look with great sadness on the fading away in so many minds of the Christianity of our childhood. Take the great mass of minds in whom it is fading, can we in any sense say that it is like the vanishing of narrow Judaism before the early dawn of the Gospel?—the phase which St. Paul saw and has so vividly pictured to us. It seems to me we are more and more coming to this issue—Has God revealed Himself to us as one whose "ways are not as our

* His brother's widow.

ways, nor His thoughts as our thoughts?" or, Do we evolve out of our own inward light the existence of One who personifies our own highest conceptions of moral good?

For my own part I am deeply thankful to the Calvinian atmosphere one has insensibly breathed from childhood for predisposing the mind in favour of the first, although by its unscriptural excesses unhappily contributing to the spreading reaction in favour of the latter.

T. ERSKINE.

ASSENT IS NOT BELIEF.

2, Forres Street, April 16.

VESCOVO DELECTISSIMO—

As to the letters enclosed, I believe that there are many who speculate on religion, not with the desire of arriving at truth, but with the purpose of finding an apology for a bad freedom; but yet there can be no doubt with any reasonable man that our right state must be light, and not darkness, and that it is a very false idea of Christianity to suppose that it implies a blind submission to authority—grave, solemn pastors followed by unquestioning, obedient flocks. God's thoughts are not as our thoughts, because we are too much influenced by the flesh; and surely God's purpose in making them known to us is not that we should simply adopt them on His authority, but that through the contemplation of them we should enter into their real meaning and preciousness, and thus become imbued with their spirit, and so make them our own thoughts. As long as God's thoughts are not our thoughts, the revelation of them has not fulfilled its purpose, and can scarcely be said to have been made.

The revelation is both objective and subjective. Christ was the objective revelation of the Father; but we need the subjective revelation, which consists not in taking a veil off the Father, but in removing the scales from our own eyes. Perhaps the objective revelation is contained in the subjective. To them who are without, who are living in the flesh, all things must necessarily be in parables.

I sympathize, however, very much with the writer's demand for a complete objectivity in God. The shadow within me must always keep its character of shadow, leading me to look outwards for the substance. I desire to know God as really (and far more) as I know a man. It is not merely by any thoughts of Him that I am to be comforted and strengthened (though I expect and find comfort and strength from such thoughts); I desire and expect an actual putting forth of His own hand, a direct breathing of His own love upon me. It is said in Deuteronomy that Moses died by the *word* of the Lord. The Hebrew for *word* also means *mouth*, and hence also *kiss;* so the Jewish tradition is that Moses died by the kiss of God. This is something more than knowing God is love, and I should like to receive all the sorrows and pains of life, as it were, by the kiss of God.

My dear Bishop, I have done you little service by this letter; but receive it lovingly, as from a friend who loves you—a friend who would pray and hope before long to die by the kiss of God.

T. ERSKINE.

THE ESTABLISHED CHURCH OF SCOTLAND.

2, Forres Street, Edinburgh, May 26.

VESCOVO CARISSIMO,—

Mr. Campbell came here yesterday to attend a great dinner given to Dr. Wylie, of Carluke, on the fiftieth anniversary of his ministerial appointment to that parish. I went with Mr. Campbell, and Mr. Story of Roseneath was the proposer of a toast, in which Mr. Campbell's name and *mine* were joined, and received honourable treatment from the proposer, who is a very able man, and who seems very anxious to make the Church of Scotland understand the sin and blunder she committed in regard to Mr. Campbell thirty-eight years ago. It would be a right thing for her to rescind her act of deposition even now, if she really sinned in passing that act. Dr. Norman Macleod was expected at the dinner, but he did not come. His brother was there, whom I like very much.

All that class of men condemn the deposition of Mr. Campbell. And yet I believe that neither in the Church of Scotland nor in the Church of England is the root of the question then agitated understood to this day.

Is a man to *become* a child of God, or is a man a child of God in virtue of his being a man? What is the meaning of the name of God proclaimed to Moses?—"The Lord God, merciful and gracious, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin, without clearing the guilty." An inexhaustible love which punishes, because the purposes of love can no otherwise be accomplished. A love which eternally desires our sympathy because such sympathy must be our holiness and blessedness, is the nature of God, and the explanation of all His dealings with us. Ever yours,

THOMAS ERSKINE.

THE MEANING OF "THY WORD" IN THE PSALMS.

2, Forres Street, June 8, 1868.

MY DEAR VESCOVO,—

I wish that I could give you more help than I feel myself able to do. I would recommend you to pray to Him who heareth the prayer of the weak and ignorant, and who answereth it. I believe that there is a practical unbelief in any real response to prayer. Most men think that prayer is good, as an acknowledgment of dependence; but they do not believe in an answer in point or in kind. I always consider the term *word* in the Psalms as the revelation of the Will of God, however that revelation is made; but it must be a revelation which my spirit hears and understands. David evidently (or at least the writer of the hundred and nineteenth Psalm) regards the word as nearer to Him, and more accessible to Him, than anything else in the world, just as Moses describes it in Deuteronomy—as being nigh to every man, in his mouth and in his heart, to feel and understand and act upon.

Of course, as far as this Word had been uttered, it became a part of the inheritance of the nation and of the race; but it could have been of no use to them, had they not all and each one of them been created with the purpose of having direct personal intercourse with God through His speaking the Word to them, and through their hearing it, and therefore having faculties suited for that intercourse.

I am getting very frail and tottering, and, moreover, the cataract is making rapid advances; so that, with my dilatory

tendencies, I sometimes fear that my life may end before my book is ready.

Ever affectionately yours,

T. ERSKINE.

I send the newspapers you asked for.

HIS OWN PLACE IN THEOLOGY.

Linlathen, July 16.

VESCOVO CARISSIMO,—

Mr. Campbell has shown me your prospectus, where my name has a position which *I can by no means acquiesce in.* It is really of no consequence to the reading public what I think on the subject of theology; most thoroughly do I sympathize with your desire to put out the false and bring in the true, in all regions of thought, and especially in the highest. I also feel with you, that one of the first steps in *this* direction is to help men to see the true place of rationalism, and the true meaning of revelation. But I am sure that the introduction of my name as you introduce it in that prospectus, would be a weakness and not a strength to you. I wish to keep my own place, which I feel ought to be a very subordinate place. It is a very difficult thing to help people by suggesting thoughts, and really to be a teacher and expositor of truth, at a moment like this, when all barriers are removed and new lines seem to be demanded. We must, however, adhere to the old; we must adhere to the Gospel of Christ; endeavouring, however, to clear it of all false interpretations. Pray wait.

Yours affectionately,

T. ERSKINE.

The post is going.

THE WITNESS AND GROWTH, OR DECAY, OF CHURCHES.

Linlathen, July 17, 1868.

MY DEAR BISHOP,—

It seems to me that you ought to quote *the witness borne by your* own church to the cause of truth, and also that you ought in general to take *the past* with you as far as you can. If you say "we have got beyond Luther," do you not in saying this, say also, that "we have got beyond St. Paul?"

My desire, certainly, would be to present truth to men in such a way as might commend it to every man's spiritual understanding; and yet, perhaps, it is possible that even the spiritual understanding may be satisfied without effecting that living change, which is the one thing needful. "Ask, and ye shall receive." I am conscious of great defect of trust in this thing; and I am disposed to say, "Lord, increase my faith," and Lord, grant me the spirit of prayer—of unceasing prayer—trustful, hopeful prayer.

I have not your prospectus here, and consequently my reference to it is probably incorrect, *verbally;* but I am sure that there are expressions in it which bear out what I have said above.*

I am expecting Plumptre to-day.

Yours ever truly,

T. ERSKINE.

* The allusion to Luther was misunderstood. It was not meant that we had got beyond Luther in the things in which he brought us out of darkness, but that there was much light now which Luther had not seen. However, the expression was altered in the Prospectus of "Present-Day Papers."

Linlathen, July 30, 1868.

DEAR FRIEND,—

You know that there are very few persons with whose conceptions of the scope and purpose of Christianity I have so much sympathy as yours. Of course all that I have written or could write is for the promotion of *that cause*, and at the service of any one who would use it for that end.

Dear friend, I feel sometimes very solitary, and I am glad to recall to mind any in whose affectionate thoughts I trust that I have a place—passing up from them to the fountain out of which all love flows.

"Fear not, for *I am with thee*," is a precious word to a poor wanderer on this earth.

Ever affectionately yours,

T. ERSKINE.

Do you know the "Secret of Life" by Samuel Cox? I think you would like it: published by Arthur Miall.

THE ETERNAL LIFE.

September 6, 1868.

DEAR BISHOP,—

I think much of you and your work, although I give so little outward demonstration of it. I have been very unwell, with an unwellness painfully affecting my spirit. My desire is to live simply by the life of faith—the eternal life. Pray for me that I may be strengthened with all might in the inner man, to live that life unceasingly.

Your letter gratified me, as all human love helps me to realize the Divine Fountain from which it flows.

Farewell. The good Lord be with you and keep you.

Ever affectionately yours,

T. ERSKINE.

WHAT GOD MUST BE.

9, Albyn Place, Edinburgh, May 4, 1869.

VESCOVO CARISSIMO,—

I am glad to hear from you, and to have the names of those who have disappeared from amongst us repeated to me, and especially to hear words of hope and assured trust in our faithful Creator, who háth said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you," "I will not fail you," and who, as the righteous One, cannot forsake the work of His own hands. Yes, my dear friend, when we know what we ourselves ought to be, we know what He is and must be. But I am most weak. I have no doubt of His goodness. I have no doubt that His righteousness must always seek our deliverance from all unrighteousness. I feel as if I should delight to go home, and be in His more manifested presence, but I also feel that I need the never-ceasing help of His Spirit, to keep me from sinking into darkness that may be felt.

Terrible revelations of the state of the poor in Edinburgh have lately been made. Christianity has done wonderfully little, considering what it is. "He that spared not His own Son, but gave Him up to the death for us all, how shall He not with Him freely give us all things!" There are many willing to help, but there seems a wonderful lack of wisdom and management on the side of the givers, and a wonderful

improvidence and degradation on the part of the receivers. There seems no idea of looking for anything real from God, guidance or help or joy. If this finds you still at Palermo, give my love to your daughter,

And believe me ever most affectionately yours,

T. ERSKINE.

127, George Street, Edinburgh, July 21.

DEAR FRIEND,—

I am always glad to think of you as one who has a brother's heart for me, and also as one who desires to do work for our common Lord in His vineyard.

I hesitate, however, as to the plan of starting a new periodical; you would find it become very burdensome before long; in fact, you would have to do it yourself, for fit agents in such an undertaking are very rare.

Would it not be safer to strengthen the hands of any well-directed, well-principled periodical by such contributions as you could collect?

I was strnck the other day in the club by the appearance of an article in the *Fortnightly*, by Llewelyn Davies, on Christian Ethics. I did not read it beyond the first page, being now very blind; but what I read pleased me very much.

I don't wish to damp you, and I am sure that if your zeal comes from the right place it won't be damped; but I would have you pause, ponder, and consider, as an old friend of mine used to say.

Ever yours,

T. ERSKINE.

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE GOSPELS AND THE EPISTLES.

127, George Street, October 31, 1869.

MY DEAR BISHOP,—

There can be no doubt that the Epistle to the Romans is very unlike the general teaching of Christ Himself in the three synoptical Gospels; being unlike the Sermon on the Mount, for example. In style and tone it is even unlike the fourth Gospel; but in substance there is considerable resemblance between them. Paul preaches not what Christ *said*, but what Christ was; he preaches Christ and Him crucified. In St. John, Christ preaches Himself chiefly also. But all Christian duty and character, through all the Gospels, as well as the Epistles, are grounded on filial loving trust in God. This is the first step; the root out of which all the rest grows. But we can only have this filial trust when we know assuredly that God is indeed our Father, our loving, forgiving Father. And we have this knowledge chiefly in the manifestation of Jesus Christ, the eternal, essential Son of God, one with the Father, in our flesh, "whilst we were yet sinners." Christ is the assurance of the fatherly trustworthiness of God. When we see Him we see the Father, tasting death for every man. When we see Him, we see what the Father desires and purposes that we should be.

Christ did the Father's will, and delighted to do it; and we are created in Him that we may partake in His mind. Christ lived by filial trust in the Father, and filial trust is the recipient organ by which He continually received out of the fulness which is in the Father. We are created in Him as branches in the Vine, that we may partake in His filial relation to the Father, and so in His filial trust.

In the Sermon on the Mount, Christ *declared* the Fatherhood of God, and the duties of man founded on that relation, but He did this just as one of the old prophets might have done it. He *declared in His words* that God is our Father, but *in His own person* He *revealed* the Father as our Father.

The Fatherhood of God is a figure of thought or of speech, apart from the essential Sonship of Christ. Nothing but *sonship* is a full revelation of fatherhood. The love of God is a mere benevolence, apart from the history of the life and death of Christ. We can fully trust no love which would not sacrifice self for us; and nothing but the history of the life and death of Christ can give us this conception of the love of God.

Christianity in its completeness could not have been preached till after Christ's death, and the teaching of Jesus could never have its proper power except in the case of those who knew what He really was, and what His history was.

The revelation of the eternal Sonship in the Divine nature is an opening up of the structure and organization of the spiritual order. The whole spiritual creation is constituted in the Son, that so it may partake in His relation to the Father, and may thus be also led into the participation of His Spirit and character. I don't see why I should send this letter, there being nothing in it which is not familiar to most men, and yet I send it *in love*. I was most thankful to see —— ——, although very unwell at the time. Give her my affectionate acknowledgments.

Very truly yours,

T. ERSKINE

The above was the last letter I had from Mr. Erskine. Shortly after, he was seized with the illness which preceded his death, and made him unable for farther correspondence. He died in Edinburgh, on the last Sunday in March, 1870, in the faith and love he had long enjoyed. "There was nothing but peace, trust, love, with perfect clearness of mind, perfect realization of being parting with this life, and being passing into that which is to come—in *one* sense to come, but in the deeper sense which was his already. The words of faith and hope and love which he spoke, he would have spoken many years ago; but they have been deepening in meaning to him through all trials of his faith since he first trusted in Christ; and I do not doubt that his special trials have more than all else tested and strengthened his faith that God is love—a faith which shines even brighter and brighter as it becomes more exclusively and entirely *the* light to us."

These are the words of one who was near to, if not with, him when he died; one well qualified to judge, and one whose own judgment had been greatly tried—his beloved friend, and God's greatly gifted servant, Dr. John Macleod Campbell, whom we have to thank God for being still left among us.

In looking over these later letters it may seem that some are scarce worth recording. But one would not lightly lose a word, and from such lips, which can never be heard again. Some names, too, are left standing which, it may be, should have been erased. But it will in time be felt, I am sure, that no one can receive but honour from having been connected in friendly terms with one who was so earnest a seeker after God and so true a saint as was Thomas Erskine of Linlathen.

A. E., Bp.

The following are quotations from Mr. Erskine's conversation or notes which he wrote or dictated:—

Many think it enough to do their duty, and not to seek God in it, nor to depend on Him; the difference is infinite.

God judges that He may teach; He never teaches that He may judge.

Life is an education. Penalty is a blessing; we must never seek to get rid of penalty; God never dispenses with penalty. I got that first from the Gorgias of Plato. It was the first light I got as to the meaning of suffering or punishment.

The eternal life is something of itself; we may lay hold of it and have it for five minutes.

It took ages to make red sandstone, how much more to educate a human soul!

What becomes of the lost (at death)? We are lost here as much as there. The lost will be found. Christ came to find and save the lost.

"Overcome evil with good." This applies to God also. He waits to help, but we must let Him in; we have the power to choose and to refuse; no other way could there be; we admit or shut out God; there can be no other position for moral creatures. Morality cannot be created; it must create itself, and must be the product of time, of experience, and choosing.

Holding to the Father, having His hand, we could swing peacefully over hell.

Hell is often here. I have been in hell and in heaven.

A sailor, who jumped overboard to save a sailor, was

asked "if he was fit to die." "I could not be made more fit," he replied, "by declining my duty."

"Search me, O Lord, and try my heart." That Psalm, and all such utterances, give us the true relations between God and man. Man should wish God, as it were, to probe him, to get out, or at, the evil.

Penalty is medicine: a physician cannot do without medicines.

THY kingdom come: not *our* kingdom, "*thy*" kingdom.

The light shineth in darkness; *i.e.*, Christ IN *you*, the hope of glory.

Goodness is the substance of God. "Bonitas non est qualitas in Deo sed substantia," says St. Augustine. "Lay hold on eternal life."

"In my Father's house are many mansions;" so it is here as well as hereafter in our different professions, vocations, and circumstances.

Thou makest Him a little lower than the angels; *i.e.*, for a little time.

Oh! to think that there is a Father ever near, ever waiting."

"Received the law, by the disposition of angels;" *i.e.*, by the hands of messengers in the old dispensation.

Beginning of the Book of Proverbs very fine.

The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God; I will not have any.

Madame de Broglie, ere dying, said, in answer to "Are

you afraid of dying?"—"J'ai causé trop avec Dieu pour avoir crainte."

He is the vine, we are the branches: we have to open the valves, to let the sap flow through to us.

SONSHIP.

The Sonship is the great thing—to enter into the meaning of the Sonship. All men are made in Christ. He is *the* Man, the Son. In Him we are called to be sons. There is a Father and a Son always. Always was a Father, the Father everlasting; therefore, always a Son: a giver and receiver, the two sides of the one globe, the upper and the lower hemisphere. Of the lower, to the lower, *we* are all called to hang, to *belong*, to be.

Unity is not oneness, solitariness; it is completion.

"By faith in His blood;" *i.e.*, by Christ's faith in His blood-shedding.

"The law of Christ" is to bear, and was to bear, the burden of others.

Merely receiving, trusting, believing, hoping,—that is righteousness,—our right state, our just state, our justification state *in the sight of God.*

"Remission of sins" means that God passes by transgression, ever forgives, ever is in a state of forgiveness, although grieving over and sorrowing for the creature as it sins, yet also teaches it, teaches it by penalty, not to sin again: there is *never* removal of penalty, for penalty is a healing process. The "nature of things" ever remains

unaltered, and the "nature of things" is the will of God; the laws which He has given to His creation, and keeps in force because they are good; and it would be evil, and creation would go wrong, were they not kept in force: *general* laws are the ways wherein the will of God generally acts.

There is no religion but in dealing with a personal God; all the rest is mere instrumentality, and may be destructive if taken for religion.

To think that there is a real goodness ever near, ever waiting.

The first principles of religion are that God is desirous that we should be good and righteous, and He is ever taking steps that we should acquire these things. What we have to do is to recognise this, and to realize that every hour and minute God has a lesson for us and is giving it to us; exercises, as it were, on this and that; and this that we may be partakers of His holiness, and so blessedness.

We are to become as little children (is urged against those who seek to know): yes, but we are not to *remain* as little children; in understanding "we are to be men;" and the humility which seeks to make religion an unreasoning obedience to diction and to authority is false humility. We are to see light in God's light, and sympathize with Him in the view He takes; to be led by God, indeed, but not as the blind, but as those to whom the reasons are given for the pursuance of that way; who are able to understand the reasons and to go with them, choosing God's ways from the knowledge and conviction that it is the true and right way *on its own merits.*

The processes of God are indeed slow, and little seems often gained or going on; but they *need* not be slow, so far

as man is concerned; and in that respect it is not *His* will that they should be slow.

There are texts of apparently different meanings in Scripture, as if there were two poles of truth, yet one truth; as when it is said, "who rewardeth not according to our works;" and again, "who rewardeth according to our works," where one truth is.

In the Eternal God there ever must have been an Eternal Giver (the Father), and an Eternal Receiver (the Son), both equally good and blessed. It is blessed to give and to receive. Such as the Father is, such is the Son; that is the meaning, otherwise it is not the true; *i.e.*, that the Father is receiver, and the Son giver.

INSPIRATION.

Letter of Mr. Erskine to the Bishop of London, now Archbishop of Canterbury, July 11, 1863.

I feel it to be an important truth, that until a man apprehends and knows the inward word, that word which is nigh him, and which is quick and powerful, he never can rightly appreciate the outward word; and yet I am also persuaded, from the history of the world, that no man can apprehend and know that inward word rightly but by help of the outward word, or some equivalent, such as Abraham and many other of the Old Testament saints had.

When once I discover the identity of the word in me, the Christ in me, the hope of glory, with the word which I find in the Bible, and with the Christ whose history is given there, I have got the only perfectly satisfactory evidence that the book is really the Revelation of God's purposes

towards men, and of His dealings with them, and I shall also feel that it had been indeed a divine gift to me, in that it has helped me to understand a Revelation deeper and more divine than itself, which God is making within the spirit of every man.

The beginning of all education in knowledge for creatures like us must be *authority;* but it is then only right or profitable when it addresses a reality within us, which it is its business and duty to develop into maturity. When this is done, we know the thing that has been taught us, and not till then. When I believe a thing because the Bible has helped me to see its truth, and not because the Bible has said that it is true, I seem to be giving less honour to the Bible than if I received the doctrine simply on *its* authority; but I am giving the true honour to God in getting that good from the Bible which He intended me to seek for.

The Bible is given me to help me to know God as the righteous Father, attractive to my entire trust and love. And if I take a belief in the Bible as a substitute for that loving trust in God, I am a great loser.

Our Lord tells Nicodemus that he could not see the kingdom of God—*i.e.*, I suppose, could not apprehend spiritual truths—unless he were born of the Spirit. And, at the same time, He tells him that he can only be born of the Spirit by knowing whence its voice came and whither it went; that is, by "knowing the only true God and Jesus Christ, whom He hath sent" (the eternal life and the birth from above being one and the same thing), because we cannot rightly understand the voice until we know the speaker.

This is the same sort of difficulty that meets us in the words, "No man cometh to me, except the Father draw

him;" and again, "No man knoweth the Father save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him." Where are we to begin? But this is a beginning of both already in our hearts, which alone makes it possible for us to understand the outward teaching about them, like Plato's ἀνάμνησις.

There seems to me something most noteworthy in this characteristic of the Bible teaching. There are few questions or doctrines proposed in it on which you cannot find a number of apparently conflicting texts. For example, "Unto Thee belongeth mercy, for Thou renderest to every man according to his work;" and this, "He hath not dealt with us after our sins, nor rewarded us according to our iniquities." Every one acquainted with the Scriptures must know how frequently these apparent contradictions occur. Now it seems evident that we are taught by this that we are to seek solution of all our difficulties from God Himself, and that the great object of the Bible is to *teach* us to know God, and to apply to Him for guidance and strength and consolation. An infallible book would be as injurious to our real spiritual education as an infallible man. It would allow us to rest satisfied short of God.

This seems to me to be the distinguishing quality of the Book, that, whilst it tells us much that is most important *about* God, its chief object is to lead us to know God Himself. This no book whatever can do for me; but this Book *leads* me to it, which no other book, except those inspired by it, does. It is this peculiarity which seems to me to give it that tone of supernaturalness which separates it from all other books. This of itself forces me to put it in a class by itself above all other books. And when I find this quality distinguishing the literature of one nation, and not

manifesting itself in a particular individual or particular period of that nation, but unquestionably forming the very essence and staple of all their literature through successive generations and centuries, I should feel that I was wilfully shutting my eyes against light if I did not acknowledge a very special divine superintendence. Still I am conscious that I believe the Bible because of the things which I find in it. Yet the long continuation in one nation of a spiritual teaching, unlike that which presents itself in other people, seems to me to establish a claim on our understanding for a reverent attention to the detail of that teaching, and to the explanation of the public events in the history of the nation which that teaching professes to give.

Thus, although the New Testament alone, and without the foundation of the Old Testament, would necessarily be a very remarkable document containing a very remarkable history and doctrine, yet I feel most thankful that it has so deep and broad a foundation of prophetic aspiration and promise as it has in the Old Testament. I feel that I believe in the Son of God—the filial Deity—apart from the authority of the Book altogether, however much helped by the Book to arrive at it; but I feel also that I require the Old Testament to give me a confidence and assurance that the Son of Mary was that Divine Person.

He is to me the revelation of the order and harmony of the spiritual universe, as being the conscience of each man, and at the same time the conscience and head of the whole humanity. We have each one of us been created to be educated into a fitness to fill a particular predestined place in the great body of the Son; and until we attain that fitness we must suffer the misery of disorder, and anarchy, and conscious guilt, in not yielding ourselves to the true Light;

but I believe that God will not be overcome of evil, but will overcome evil with good ultimately; and that He who has waited so long for the formation of a bit of old red sandstone, will wait, with much long-suffering, for the perfecting of His spiritual offspring; and that thus the πολλῷ μᾶλλον of the 9th verse of the 5th chapter of St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans will have its full realization.

I believe that the exposition of the Bible, which can manifest its truth to every man's conscience, is the only satisfactory evidence that can be given to it. I feel convinced that men must be made to see and feel that the teaching of the Bible commends itself to their reason and conscience before they can really acknowledge either its truth or its inspiration; and that when they have come to see and to feel that it does so commend itself, they will require no further evidence in its support.

I think also that they ought to hear and understand that this treasure comes to them through the channel of earthen vessels, and that no real dishonour is done to the treasure by showing the earthiness of the earthen vessel which contains it.

NOTES FOR A DISCOURSE—ST. PAUL.

The Apostle St. Paul says, that he is not ashamed of the Gospel, for in it is revealed *the righteousness of God*, and the righteousness which God acknowledges as the true righteousness of man, and it is revealed to him by *faith*. The word faith has two meanings in the Bible, as well as in common use, which, though closely related, are yet distinct. The first meaning is *belief*, the second is *trust*. The first is the root, out of which the second springs. I cannot trust

in God or man, without a belief of trustworthiness. I must apprehend a character justifying and warranting my trust, before I can truly trust. An entire trust in our righteous Father, is evidently the right state of man; trust in Him, as the loving and wise and righteous guide of each step we take, and trust in Him, as the Eternal fountain of blessing and protection, shielding us from all evil, and assuring us of all good. This trust, therefore, necessarily presupposes the belief, that God is an almighty, loving, wise, and righteous Father and Guide.

Now what is my warrant for believing this? Is it the Bible? Do I believe this character because I find it in the Bible? or, do I not rather believe the Bible because I find this is in it? But what really determines me to believe in this character of God? It is surely my inward consciousness that this *ought* to be the character, connected with the conviction that what ought to be must be. The outward aspect of the world—the apparently hopeless confusion and wickedness and misery of man, sometimes leads us to question whether matters could be thus, if God really desired the righteousness and happiness of His creatures. But when I look onward I there find, in the midst of similar confession and wickedness and misery, a deep conviction that this evil condition is contrary to the will of God; that God is protesting against it, and calling on me to join in His protest; and that His will must finally prevail. The belief that God loveth righteousness and hateth iniquity, is the true ground of hope for man; and no man conversing candidly and earnestly with his own conscience can doubt that God does this. He is certainly doing this in my heart, every man may say, and I cannot but believe that He is doing the same in all other men, whether they attend to it

or not. I know that I can so occupy myself with outward things, as to protect myself from His intrusion; and doubtless there are many who, without any effort at resistance, have passed their life in an almost entire unconsciousness of His dealing with them; yet, when the question is put to them, they would feel that they were contradicting their strongest spiritual instincts, if they did not confess the righteousness of God.

I believe that God's purpose towards me is, that I should be a good man. I believe that He made me for this, and orders all the events of life for the same end. I believe that He is educating and training me unto this right state, by all the circumstances of my life. And I believe, further, that He will persevere in this purpose, until it is accomplished. I feel that this belief gives me full confidence in God. I feel that it is well for me to be in His hands; for I see that what He desires for me, is the very thing which I desire most for myself. I see, also, that I must begin by having this confidence; that it must be my starting point; that, until I have this confidence, all that I do, in relation to God, must be done with the thought of escaping from a sentence, or, as it were, bribing God. But, it may be said, does not the sense of sin weaken, or even destroy, this confidence? Does not God's love of righteousness include His hatred and condemnation of all unrighteousness? Yes; He hates all unrighteousness, but He does not hate me. If He did not hate unrighteousness, I should have no hope for myself or for the race. I should feel that I myself and all my race might remain for ever under the dominion of unrighteousness. But under the reign of a righteous Father this is impossible. A righteous Father must desire that His children should be righteous. He ceases to be a

righteous Father the moment He ceases to desire this. He must for ever desire it, and He must use all the means which to His wisdom appear fittest for accomplishing it in them. They must have righteousness, not only by knowing their Father's righteousness and love, but by knowing that it is a bitter thing to depart from Him.

The subjoined note on the Holy Eucharist, by Mr. Erskine, was incorporated in the "Present-day Paper," No. II., "On the Eucharist;" but as that number may not is deemed better come into the hands of those who read this memorial, it to append it here

THE HOLY EUCHARIST.

"God has revealed Himself to us in a man—in the Man Christ Jesus; so that as we know and understand a man, we might in a measure know and understand Him. In this manifestation He has shown us what He Himself is, and what He desires and purposes for us that we should be. And here is the wonder. That which He manifests Himself to be is the very thing that He purposes we should be. Herein is the love which passeth knowledge. But does He mean that we should be gods? Not so—far be it: He purposes for us that we should know ourselves to be creatures utterly dependent on Him for our being, and for the continuation of our being; but made by Him capable of receiving His Spirit into us, that we may consciously be partakers of the Divine nature, and be fellow-workers with Him in working out salvation. This capacity of receiving God is that which distinguishes man from the lower animals, and which remains with Him whether

he uses it, or not. 'The light shineth in the darkness, though the darkness comprehendeth it not.' And the Spirit breatheth where He will, and man hears the voice, though he may not know whence it cometh, or whither it leadeth. In truth, it is not a mere congruous recipiency, a mere capacity of receiving the Spirit, it is the actual presence of Christ in man, which was declared as the Gospel, as the tidings of great joy and infinite hope. This is spoken of as the 'mystery hid from ages and generations, but now made known, as Christ in you the hope of glory.' This is the preaching of the Apostle of the Gentiles to the Colossians and the Ephesians. This is the bond uniting man to God, and man to all men. And by the continual realization of this great truth man is to grow in conformity to the Divine Will, that he may be filled with all the fulness of God. Surely when the Apostle prays for the converts 'that Christ may dwell in their hearts by faith,' he means the same thing as when the Saviour Himself says, 'He that eateth me, he shall live by me.' I should think myself trifling with the Word of God, if I interpreted the second of these expressions by the first, and not the first by the second. In both passages we have opened up to us the great purpose of God, that Christ should be the Head of the Christian Family, animating all the members with His own life; that thus they may be partakers with Him in His Glory: 'For no man hath ascended, or can ascend into heaven, but He that came down from heaven, even the Son of Man which is in heaven.' That is, none can ascend into heaven except by being partakers in that life which descended from heaven. Can there be any doubt that this is the real Communion, and that all ordinances are but signs and symbols of it? And are not the ambassadors of

Christ forgetting their highest mission, when they occupy the thoughts of men with the signs, instead of the great thing signified? We are feeding on the Body and Blood of Christ, when our souls are occupied with the manifestation which God has given us of Himself and His loving purpose towards us, in the life and death of the man Christ Jesus; when we are vividly apprehending that it is by dying with Him that we are to live with Him; and that He became a man, and lived and suffered and died, that we might be sharers with Him in His holiness and blessedness.

"He would have us holy as He is Holy. Not by any fiction of law, but really holy; yet not in virtue of any holiness which we can call our own, but by the indwelling of God in us. So that in the most advanced stage of the Christian life, the greatest proficient will say, not from a sense of duty, not from any unnecessary humility, but in the soberness of absolute truth and experience, 'I am nothing in myself, and incapable by myself of doing any good thing.' I believe that this is the highest condition that a creature can possibly be in. And so I would venture to criticize the confession used in the Church of Geneva. 'Nous confessons que nous sommes des pauvres pêcheurs, nés dans la corruption, inclins au mal, incapables par nous-mêmes de faire du bien.' All the confession I believe to be most true, but I believe that the last clause is not the confession of a sinful state, but of the state which will continue to be man's state in his highest exaltation, and what is indeed connected with all his hopes of blessedness, because it is necessarily connected with his living by Christ in him.

"I do not undervalue the traditions of the Church, but I believe that as far as these traditions have living truth in them, they have, and must have, one tendency and signi-

fication. They must have the signification that they belong to Light; that they are expressions of Light; and if they are received simply as authority, calling for submission, instead of addressing the spiritual reason, calling for sympathy and consentient co-operation, they are turned aside from the purpose of Christ in giving them to us. 'The good ground' are they who understand the word as well as receive it, marking that in them which distinguishes them from all the others.

"Considering then, that Christianity really means the indwelling of God in man's spirit, we can easily understand how the Lord's Supper, as the outward sign of this indwelling, should have come to take so large a place in the thoughts of many, to the extent even of being identified with the great and blessed truth of which it is the symbol. The danger is, that it should become the substitute for it—as it has done in the Church of Rome.

"Let us not put the warning from us. Let us diligently seek the blessing itself, and thankfully receive the ordinance as a voice calling us to diligence in seeking it.

"Whilst, then, we need not wonder, considering its character, at the place which this ordinance has attained in all Christian Churches, yet it must be evident to the reader of the New Testament, that the place now given to it is greater than that which it had in the time of the Apostles. In the Acts of the Apostles it is spoken of simply as the 'breaking of bread,' and in most of the Epistles it is not even alluded to. I would especially refer to the Epistles to the Colossians and the Ephesians, to the Epistles of St. Peter and St. John, in which we have such openings up of the life of God in man. I ought also to refer to the Creeds which do not mention the Lord's Supper, thus showing that

in the four first centuries that ordinance had not become what it too often now has, a substitution and equivalent for all else."

The subjoined has also appeared before in print, but it is now very rare, and is appended as a fair summary of the general conclusions of Mr. Erskine's mind up to the year 1862, when it was printed:—

LETTER OF MR. ERSKINE TO THE AUTHOR (MR. CRAIG) OF "FINAL SALVATION," &c.

DEAR SIR,—

Your epistle on the "Final Salvation of All Men from Sin," has been put into my hands by a friend, who knew that the principles contained in it are those with which I have long concurred and sympathized: and having read it, I cannot help reaching out to you a brotherly hand, and saying, God speed you!

The title of your pamphlet has been, I think, well chosen. It is not a deliverance from punishment, but a deliverance from sin, that you desire or expect. All punishment appointed by God, whether it be the natural result of sin, or any superadded chastisement, is intended by Him "for our profit, that we may be partakers of His holiness;" so that a deliverance from punishment, instead of being a thing to be desired, would, in fact, be equivalent to the deliverance of a sick man from the necessary and wise prescription of a skilful physician. This is the revealed purpose of punishment,—a purpose agreeing with the character of God, and with the relation in which He stands to men. He is the "righteous

Father"—"the Father of the spirits of all flesh," "who willeth not the death of a sinner; but that all should come to repentance." Let us hold fast the purpose of God in all punishment, and remember that as it is the purpose of Him who changeth not, but who is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever, it cannot be a purpose confined to any one stage of our being, but must extend over all the stages, and the whole duration of our being. It is surely most unreasonable to suppose that God should change His manner of dealing with us, as soon as we quit this world, and that if we have resisted, up to that moment, His gracious endeavours to teach us righteousness, He should at once abandon the purpose for which He created us and redeemed us, and give us up to the everlasting bondage of sin. Do we not feel that such a supposition is too horrible—that it is most dishonouring to Him who has said, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee," and, "The mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed, but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord that hath mercy on thee?"

This reasoning agrees with the argument presented to us in the 5th chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, where the Apostle, in setting forth the fulness of the redemption by Christ, declares that the benefit through Him is, in extent, parallel to the evil introduced by Adam; that is, that as the evil affects all without exception, so the blessing embraces all without exception. Let any one read the 12th and 18th verses of that chapter, as if in juxtaposition, which they really are by construction, and he will find himself constrained to admit that this and nothing less could have been the meaning of the writer. Indeed, through the

whole chapter, there is a preponderating advantage thrown into the scale of the redemption, to the effect, that not only were the evils of the fall met by the salvation of Christ, but that the gain far surpassed the loss, so that it is really contrary to sound criticism to hold, that in that most marked and most remarkable passage, where the comparative results of the fall and the restoration are expressly considered, any ground is allowed or given for a doubt as to the final salvation of the whole human race. The 11th chapter of that Epistle is pervaded by the same doctrine, being a declaration that God's election does not affect the truth and certainty of the final salvation of men, but relates to the temporary use which He makes of individuals or nations to accomplish the ends of His government. I know well, that most people in this country feel that all such arguments and expositions are met and overturned by the solemn words of our Lord in the 25th chapter of St. Matthew, and by other passages of a like import. I feel, on the contrary, that the passages which I have quoted from the Epistle to the Romans ought really to be considered as the ruling passages on the question, and that those from St. Matthew, and others of the same class, should be explained by them, and in accordance with them, because in them the fall and the restoration are expressly compared with each other in their whole results, and the entire superiority claimed for the restoration in amount of benefit, and entire equality in point of extent; all which would seem to me to be utterly nullified by the fact of a single human spirit being abandoned and consigned to a permanent state of sin and misery. I therefore understand that awful scene represented in St. Matthew, as declaring the certainty of the connection between sin and

misery, but not as a *finality*. I do not believe that *aionios*, the Greek word rendered "eternal" and "everlasting" by our translators, really has that meaning. I believe that it refers to man's essential or spiritual state, and not to time either finite or infinite. Eternal life is living in the love of God; eternal death is living in self; so that a man may be in eternal life or in eternal death for ten minutes, as he changes from the one state to the other.

There is no lack of arguments for the general view which I have taken of this subject, drawn either from conscience or the Scriptures, or both. There is one which cannot but have great weight with all who fairly consider it. Throughout even the Old Testament, God is more constantly presented to us as a Father than in any other character; and in the New, our Lord speaks of it as the chief purpose of His appearance in this world, to reveal *His Father*, as the Father of the whole human race. In both, frequent appeals are made to our sense of the love and desires and obligations of an earthly parent towards his children, in order to impress on us the nature of the relation in which God stands to each one of us, and very frequently these appeals are accompanied with the assurance that the love of the human parent is but a faint reflection of the love of the Heavenly Father. What can be more touching than the appeal in the Prophet Isaiah? "Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yea, they may forget, yet will not I forget thee." The parallel passage in the New Testament is this: "If ye then, *being evil*, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Heavenly Father give!" But we all feel that the first and everduring duty of a father

is to endeavour to make his child righteous. A righteous father must always do this. The moment he ceases to do this, he ceases to be a righteous father. However the son transgresses, we never feel that the father's obligation to try to bring him back can be dissolved. And the righteous father's heart goes along with his obligation; he could not give up his son although the whole world agreed that he had done all that could be done for him, and that it was useless to try any more. And shall we not reason confidently that the righteous Heavenly Father will do exceeding abundantly above all that the righteous earthly father can either desire or effect? But does this desire for the righteousness of his child, in the heart of the earthly father, terminate with the child's life? Although he is only the father of his body, does he not yearn after the soul of his son, who has been, perhaps, cut off suddenly in the midst of sin and thoughtlessness? He does indeed yearn after his soul, and carries it on his heart a heavy burden, mourning all his life long, and wavering between hope and fear as to what his everlasting lot may be. The righteous earthly father, being only the father of the child's body, feels thus and acts thus; and can we suppose that the Father of the spirits of all flesh will throw off his care for the souls of his children when they leave this world, because they have, during their stay here, resisted his efforts to make them righteous? The supposition seems monstrous and incredible, and in truth could not be acquiesced in by any human being, were it not for certain false ideas concerning the justice or righteousness of God.

I believe that love and righteousness and justice in God mean exactly the same thing, viz., a desire to bring His whole

moral creation into a participation of His own character and His own blessedness. He has made us capable of this, and He will not cease from using the best means for accomplishing it in us all. When I think of God making a creature of such capacities, it seems to me almost blasphemous to suppose that He will throw it from Him into everlasting darkness, because it has resisted His gracious purposes towards it for the natural period of human life. No; He who waited so long for the formation of a piece of old red sandstone, will surely wait with much long-suffering for the perfecting of a human spirit.

I have found myself helped in taking hold of this hope by understanding that God really made man that He might *educate* him, not that He might *try* him. If we suppose man to be *merely on his trial* here, we more readily adopt the idea of a final judgment coming after the day of trial is over. But if we suppose man to be created, not to be *tried*, but to be *educated*, we cannot believe that the education is to terminate with this life, considering that there is so large a proportion of the human race who die in infancy, and that of those who survive that period there are so many who can scarcely be said to receive any education at all, and that so few—not one in a million—appear to benefit by their education. That, as there are great judgment days in this world, so there will be great judgment days in the other world, I have no doubt; but I believe that they are all subservient to the grand purpose of spiritual education. We are judged in order to be thereby educated; we are not educated that we may be judged. I believe that each individual human being has been created to fill a particular place in the great body of Jesus Christ, and that a special

education is needed to fit each one for his place. Whilst we are ignorant of the destined place of each, it must of course be impossible for us to understand the wonderful variety of treatment, through which the great Teacher is conducting all by a right way to the right end. But He knows and does what is best and wisest; and may there not be a necessity in some cases for treatment which can only be had on the other side of the grave? And shall we in our short-sightedness consider Him debarred from any such treatment?

I cannot believe that any human being can be beyond the reach of God's grace, and the sanctifying power of His Spirit. And if all are within His reach, is it possible to suppose that He will allow any to remain unsanctified? Is not the love revealed in Jesus Christ a love unlimited, unbounded, which will not leave undone anything which love could desire? It was surely nothing else than the complete and universal triumph of that love which Paul was contemplating when he cried out, "Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!" (Rom. xi. 33.)

Let me conclude now by saying that I am persuaded that this doctrlne which you advocate is the only sufficient ground for an entire confidence in God, which shall, at the same time, be a righteous confidence. According to it, God created man that he might be a partaker in His own holiness, as the only right and blessed state possible for him. If I truly apprehend this—if I truly apprehend that righteousness and blessedness are one and the same thing, and just the very thing I most need—I shall rejoice to know that God desires my righteousness; and if I farther know that He will never cease to desire it and to insist upon it, and that

all His dealings with me are for this one end, then I can have an entire confidence in Him, as desiring for me the very thing I desire for myself. I shall feel that I am perfectly safe in His hand, that I could not be so safe in any other hand; for that, as He desires the best thing for me, so He alone knows and can use the best means of accomplishing it in me. Thus I can actually adopt the sentiment of the Psalmist, and say, "Thou art my strong habitation, whereunto I may continually resort. Thou hast given commandment to save me, for Thou art my rock and my fortress." And I can adopt these words without any feeling of self-trust, because my confidence has no back look to myself, but rests simply on God. The greatest sinner upon earth might at once adopt those words, if he only saw that righteousness was his true and only possible blessedness, and that God would *never* cease desiring this righteousness for him. I am fully persuaded that the real meaning of believing in Jesus Christ is believing in this eternal purpose of God, the purpose of making us living members of the body of His Son. And as this blessed faith helps me to love God and trust Him for myself, so it helps me to love my fellow-creatures, because it assures me that, however debased and unloveable they may be at present, yet the time is coming when they shall all be living members of Christ's body, partakers in the holiness and beauty and blessedness of their Lord.

I remain, dear Sir,

Yours truly,

T. ERSKINE.

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[V.]

PRESENT-DAY PAPERS ON PROMINENT QUESTIONS IN THEOLOGY.

THE FUTURE TEMPORAL SUPPORT OF THE CHRISTIAN MINISTRY

THE FUTURE TEMPORAL SUPPORT OF THE CHRISTIAN MINISTRY.

THE position of the Christian ministry in the not distant future, and in some cases even now, as to its temporal support, is one fraught with great and increasing difficulty. Whether it is to be maintained in England as at present by the State; whether, as in other countries, it is to be supported by free-will offerings, endowments, or, as in some, by the sale of the sacraments; or whether finally it is to assume a position unconnected with the receipt of money payments at all; are questions of great interest, the solution of which is as yet hidden in the future, and at which as yet we can only guess. All that we can see with certainty is that present arrangements cannot long continue anywhere; and all that we can at present do with advantage is to draw from our experience of the past some contribution for the welfare of the future. At present currents are setting so strongly against the ideas and usages of the past in almost all things, that if we would not find ourselves out at sea and deprived of familiar objects, we must endeavour to cast anchor near them ere they are out of sight, and keep as near as may be to well-known territory. All that we propose to consider in this paper, however, is

some of the external aspects of the Christian ministry, and how they may be best preserved; in other words, "In what method is the future of the Christian ministry to be provided for in matters of temporal support?"

Few among us are as yet prepared to relinquish the idea of having or requiring a Christian ministry altogether; neither the Church nor the world, we believe, has as yet attained to that eminence which enables them to desire to dispense with or to be without its assistance; nor are we as yet prepared to see the ministry so combined with other avocations as to require no aid from external sources for its support. A great majority in this country, we believe, desires its continuance, and prefers its being uncombined with other avocations; that it should be an exclusive occupation, not deriving its subsistence from other industry. The question therefore is, how is its maintenance to be secured? In this country, that is, both in England and in Scotland, such maintenance has hitherto been secured in the main by State Establishments. But the stream of tendency seems now to show that such mode of maintenance will not be long continued. If this should prove to be the case, in what manner, then, is the ministry to be maintained? In that which we purpose to say upon the subject we have come to no foregone conclusion, however, that Establishments *are* about to be destroyed; we shall look at the question apart from any such consideration, although no doubt the signs of the times have been among the reasons which have disposed us to take up and consider this question, and to bring to the subject such experience in the matter as we have derived from the past, both in Established and in un-Established Churches. In our day the Christian ministry has been maintained as a separate occupation mainly by State endowments and the voluntary

principle. We have to answer the question which of these, or what modification of them, is best or most likely to be obtained for the maintenance of the ministry in the future? We shall look at the two principles by their own light, that is, as seen by the experience of their working.

The Establishment method or principle has by many—indeed, by a large party in the Church—been much confused, and prevented from being seen and considered in its genuine form, by their coupling with it a matter which has no concern with it—the supposed influence on the Church which this connection gives to the State—an idea which, in truth, has no connection with the establishment of religion by the State so far as the religion itself is concerned, as experience will show. It is inferred that from such connection something must be yielded by the Church as it were in payment. But experience does not show that such has been the case; for if at any one time the establishment of religion by the State has been affected in one direction by the union, it has been affected in another and opposite direction at another time, and both times, we believe, not in opposition to but in unison with the general mind of the Church. Where religion is established by the State there is, no doubt, and must ever be, some joint tribunal for the decision of questions litigated in the Church. But such tribunal, we think, has never been found to decide questions upon a principle different from that held by the Church at the time. If of late years, for example, any decisions have been in favour of what are called liberal opinions, in the past they were in favour of the opposite. If at present the decisions have given liberty to thought, in past time the State or the secular arm, as it was then called, delivered over heretics to the stake. In both cases the decisions were in connection

with questions debated *in* the Church; in no case were decisions given antagonistic to the Church as a Church; and it cannot be questioned that the decisions, although violently objected to, were in accordance with what were the views of the great majority in the then Church, and so in truth were in conformity with the views of the Church herself as a whole. But had it not been so, and were, as has never been the case, a separate tribunal demanded for Church affairs, we think that it is more than probable that a State tribunal, that is, a tribunal wholly separate sitting in judgment on questions disputed by other parties, giving judgment between contending persons with whom it had no personal interests bound up, might have some advantage over a tribunal where the parties themselves were judges, especially when the matter in dispute was one which had to be decided by an external and written law, as must be the case in the greater number of questions which arise within the Church. Party-feeling too often obscures truth in any matter in dispute, and most of all in religious questions, where a conviction is present that something infinite is at stake. The party against which the decision is given, too often supposing that injustice is done to him, accuses the tribunal. What would be the consequence were this tribunal composed of the parties themselves? Something of this sort at present we see going on within the Church of England, and the State is blamed for that with which the State has nothing to do. The parties having issues before the mixed tribunals in our days have been parties for whom in some cases it was impossible to have any other judgment, or on whom if any other judgment had been had it would have been unfair, not the judgment of the whole Church but of individuals in it, and in some

cases of the parties themselves. We have heard men, who should have known and felt more reverently towards the highest tribunals of their country, call the present tribunals "a mixed company of Jews, Turks, infidels, and heretics," and clamour for a court consisting alone of successors of the Apostles, that is, of ecclesiastics or of bishops only, forgetting that the questions of late at stake have been matters in dispute among these very "successors" themselves, and that it was needful and actually indispensable to have some one to sit in judgment not personally interested. And when we think who the parties were themselves in these cases, this conclusion is still more evident; for in one case it was no less a person than the Archbishop of Canterbury, afterwards excommunicated by the Bishop of Exeter, and in another the Bishop of Natal, excommunicated by the Bishop of Capetown. Succession evidently does not confer infallibility; and if infallibility does not rest with ecclesiastical councils, we see no superiority which they can have to any other. No doubt the ultimate and only logical solution to such a premiss is the issue which has been come to in the case of the Pope, which, although of course it does not secure a real infallibility, secures an action amongst those who receive it.

But if the State connection does not infer any real interference with the freedom and action of the Church, we do not see how in any other material way the establishment of religion by the State can be objected to, or in all general respects be other than an advantage. There may be instances of defect and abuse, and even great practical difficulties; but there are none, we believe, which are not capable of mitigation and amendment, or which can be weighed with the advantages which it confers, such as the giving to the

ministry a social status, or an entrance into all ranks and varieties of society, and the setting it comparatively free from that *direct* connection with money payments in exchange for religion which, where the ministry has to be maintained in this manner, presses the more spiritual-minded to the ground. The evil of such a connection cannot be appreciated by those who have had no experience of its working; this is only to be had in that which is called the voluntary system, without some practical experience of which we cannot adequately treat the position of an Establishment. Let us, therefore, turn to a consideration of this principle and its operation.

Both principles start from the same foundation, viz., that external maintenance is to be afforded; but they have this fundamental difference also, that one principle gives its aid, as it were in faith, or in credit for work to be done, the other at sight, or for work accomplished; the one pays for the whole, the other for the piece; the one is the dealing of the nation with a class, the other of individuals with individuals; the one bears hard upon some who do not want the work, the other on none, for those who do not want it need not pay for it. The latter, no doubt, seems the fairest; but does it meet the real case of mankind and religion? Let us look first at that which they have both in common, and see how far the foundation has greater reference to the one or the other principle. That which they have in common is the connection of money with religion as a question of maintenance of debit and credit. There are some passages of Scripture to the purpose, such as that "the labourer is worthy of his hire," "he that preacheth the Gospel shall live of the Gospel," and others. St. Paul no doubt sanctioned the principle, yet does he also say that he did not use it himself; nay, he evidently himself shrank from its

personal application, and we may say, indeed, from all direct connection of money with religion; so much so that when the question apparently concerns but the poor and needy, and not Christian ministry, he says "Let there be no gatherings when I come;" and again, "But I have used none of these things;" and again, "I would rather die than make my glorying" (*i.e.*, by "using" these things) "void." That principle, therefore, or its application, should be preferred which, if the retention of the connection of money for religion is to be maintained, should remove the connection to the farthest possible distance; and this no doubt is opposed to the preference of the voluntary system of direct payment. The connection of money, however, with religion has become so constant and close in our days that it enters into the arrangements of all Christian communions, established or otherwise, so that it is difficult to discriminate which is which. But it is not difficult to discern that so far as it enters, and in proportion as it enters openly, it is an evil. When churches are used for the collection of money during divine worship, and appeals are made for money, and the chief office of a bishop has become the collection of money, or preaching of what are called "charity sermons," surely divine worship and the Christian ministry are felt to be injured and taken from their high uses. How much more when, as we have seen it, collections are made in church in behalf of the ministry itself? But this connection of money with religion as a mode for the maintenance of its ministry is all but universal in that which is called the voluntary system. If the principle of a money connection is granted, what we have to consider is which of the two methods is the more expedient, direct or indirect payment, the Establishment or voluntary principle?

No one can judge of the expediency of the voluntary principle as a mode of provision for the ministry, save those who have themselves come under the experience of its operation. Of these, save in very exceptional cases, the verdict is unfavourable; and this chiefly on moral grounds. It appears to lower not only the moral standing of those who are under its influence, but also the very nature of the religion with which it is connected. That it should do the first is not very difficult to explain; that it should do the latter is not so easy to be seen, yet doubtless it is so, and this mainly, we believe, from money connections unavoidably lowering the spiritual religion. Its deteriorating effect on persons seems to arise from the all but inevitable introduction of secondary motives, such as competitions, questionable and indelicate means of obtaining ends which seem in some cases unobtainable without them, or, at least, experimentally are found not otherwise to be obtained. And in such cases it is those who are most spiritual who suffer most. What is called a "gentleman" (and by this I do not mean merely a high-born or highly-educated person, but one who has the feelings of a gentleman, and happily such are not confined to any one class, or standard, or education) cannot, and does not long continue to subject himself to its operations, that is, if there be any way of escape from them. Many such after a trial have said that they would rather break stones upon the road than continue in so false a position, one both degrading to themselves and their work; and this, from no feeling of improper pride, but that they felt that their higher things were injured. Nor were such men ungrateful for the help they received by the voluntary system; but they felt that it was injurious both to themselves and the religion to which they ministered. Such were willing to bear any true

burden for Christ's sake, but they did not feel this to be true, or to have been intended by Christ when He came among men to reveal the Father. They had come to doubt whether it did not injure Christ. They felt that they were making merchandise and capital of His holy name. They were ready to be spent and to be offered with Him, but not in this way. This was not the way in which He himself and His Apostles were offered, nor was this following in their steps. Instead of dying for Christ, they were making a *livelihood* out of Christ, and this feeling appalled them. The statements and appeals, the collecting-books and money-boxes, the seat-rents and offertories, their souls loathed and hated. Thankful were they, most thankful, to such men as did these things for them—Collectors, Secretaries, Organizers,—nevertheless they could not but feel at their approach a sort of shrinking and a sense of shame, a sense also of fear, and a sense of doubt whether they did right to hold out their hats and hands. Alas, poor men, they did not think it was thus to be when first they fell in love with Christ. They were, indeed, to follow the Lamb whithersoever He went; but they did not think that He would go here, and they were not sure that here they could trace His steps as to giving and receiving. But they were poor men, and what could they do? They had forgotten all about money when they began, for their hearts were full of Christ. They did not remember or perhaps know what it meant to preach the Gospel and make known God's love as if they had not other means of subsistence than to come upon those to whom they declared God's unbought sacrifice for money to pay for *them.* All this was hidden from them, or they did not advert to it. Now it was experienced, they could not do or bear it; and no wonder. A cross they did expect, but not such a cross

as this; they doubted if it was a true cross; they concluded at last that it was not, and abandoned their office. Many such cases there are.

When direct payments are made, as by the voluntary system, for religious knowledge, it is scarce in practice possible to divest the transaction from the feeling of buying or selling religion. And when the charms of the minister fail, and he grows bodily frail and weak, or there are no bidders for him, and nothing more is to be got on the principle of barter, what remains but that he must depend on the charity of his old flock, on those who soon have ceased to know, and of many who cannot remember him? What a position! what a picture! and yet, alas, too often realized. Many have come to this, and there is at last no escape from it after a time. Unhappy men! Many such there are, old and faithful servants of their churches, men who are ashamed, yet who feel that they ought not to be ashamed—that they have only done what they could, but who are yet not sure they should have done it—who know not their own selves, judge not their own selves, but are waiting in hope that when the Lord comes they will not be found wanting, yet unhappy in their lives, mendicant friars without the glory of friardom, beggars for Christ's sake, without being sure that Christ was the better of them, or wanted them so to serve; waiting at a door which is not yet opened, a door from which they expect the Bridegroom. Alas, poor beggars and unhappy ones! Yet at times so happy—for such are not always mournful or in doubt. At times it is given them to see that it was, if there was blame, the blame of a system to which they had been born, and not their own—a false system; yet that *they* had served truly; yea, a double servitude, a servitude which *He* knew, and

would, yea, did now acknowledge, for whose name's sake they had waited "labouring and not fainting." Yes, at times most happy when heaven was thus opened and they saw Jesus, their Jesus, at the right hand of God; and God and they knew that if they had had service they did not expect, yet it was service, and His service, a service which had to be done. It was indeed a double service and a following of the true path, the path of trial and martyrdom; and this of the hardest kind, in that it had none of the outward signs and honours of martyrdom, and such consolations as these give; and, still worse, for these are but vain, this, that they themselves were not at times sure that it was one to which they were truly called. Sometimes they feared it was scarce for Christ they laboured; that it was but for their own livelihood, "the meat that perisheth," while yet they were unable then to help it. Martyrs they were, but without the glory, confessors with none to confess to. Poor hidden saints, of whom the world knew not—yea, who knew not their own selves,—yet saints, we believe, whom the Lord knew true saints, and the more true that they knew not their own selves but to be testified to "in that day." No less saints in that few or none recognised the cause of their sufferings. We have now no lions, nor catacombs, nor "vultus instantis tyranni," nor incense to Cæsar, no tortures, and no sword; but martyrs and martyrdoms equally real, although their sufferings are not so apparent. The cross ever remains; if it be not borne outwardly, it is inwardly. Have not—reversing the Apostle's words—have not we known many noble, many rich, highly educated, and of the highest social circles, who are now serving humbly at Christian ministries, who are no longer known by the high and noble? whose old friends have for-

saken them, and whose relatives have cast them off, or "damn them with a faint applause?" We have known such. And still worse, we have known them when so forsaken maintained by congregations and churches making small collections to keep them alive—collections of some pounds annually — rich congregations who are not ashamed to offer such maintenance; we have seen vestries overhaul their little accounts, and, when money has been given them to spend on religious purposes, not ashamed to accuse them of lavishing it, nay, of spending it on themselves. This we have seen. Such cases we have known. We have known ministers so tried, and none to comfort them! These are no imaginary wounds. Some of such (I speak here mainly of one renowned for distinguished scholarship) have accepted most responsible offices as superintendents of ministries as well as ministries themselves, and who naturally thought that means would be provided them for their work, means provided for their clergy, schoolmasters, churches, school-houses, books—the means, in short, and apparatus of religion,—bricks to build, and straw for bricks; yet when none such were given, demands were made for explanation how they had obtained the aid when such was found. Such a religious officer at first spends his own; when this is exhausted he turns to others for help. What is the general reply? Are means put into his hands, or intrusted to his discretion, whose office it is to superintend? Rarely so. Too generally the response is, "Why did you embark in this or that?"—why is so much required?—why do you need so much?—there must be waste, or mal-appropriation. Give us a formal statement." Do we mean that there should be no statement, no account? Certainly not. But those who have had any experience in

this matter will know what is meant by what is said, and that with such a spirit and such a system no real spiritual work can be accomplished.*

In fact, after a time, the voluntary system, which is entirely dependent on individuals, ever breaks down and runs into the hand which trusted to it, and this even when its use is carried into so high a region as the episcopate. Even there there is the same cry, "Lord, how long?" and the feeling that the labour has been in vain, and that self-denial has borne little fruit. Even such experience that they may have rushed into that to which they were not called, and that the Lord did not require this labour exercised in such a way. Such also are unhappy in thinking that they have been useless or standing in the way of something better. But

* I should be extremely sorry if, in writing thus of the voluntary system, it should be thought that I had forgotten or ignored the examples which my own experience must have shown to be sufficient, at least to some extent, to qualify the rule I have been laying down. My own experience of the system, no doubt, has been most favourable. I cannot recall such names as Buccleuch, Lothian, Home, Glasgow, Rolles, Poltalloch, and others in Scotland, nor my own remembrances of a fund started in London in behalf of my own work and diocese, without deep emotions of love and gratitude; and the laity of the Episcopal Church in the North have, I believe, *as a whole*, incurred an odium which they do not deserve. The amounts contributed to the maintenance of that Church are large, although those of the recipients are small, because the numbers of recipients are out of all proportion to the number of givers. It is the want of numbers which is in fault, not the want of liberality in the numbers. Add to this the facts that the Episcopal Church in the North has practically an Establishment to contend with, has been and is divided into two bodies; a *Scotch* Episcopal Church, properly so called, with special views and rites, and members of the Church of England living in Scotland (I am speaking of the working, not the theoretical aspect); and that the clergy of a high social standing who have come to her from the South have considered it, as a rule, to be their duty to ignore the Southern and adopt the Northern attitude—while the Southern is that alone which commends the Episcopal Church to the majority of men in Scotland, and assuredly not its Caroline or nonjuring aspects, with the memories of Sharp and the College of Bishops, which, as a whole, are alien to and disliked by the bulk of the nation. When we look at all this, it is not difficult to see how it is that the Episcopal Church in the North is depressed and in want of means as a voluntary body, and this mainly from defect in the amount of numbers, not in the amounts contributed by the individuals. At the same time it is argued that such a method of support as the voluntary system is insufficient in any case as a *ministry*, and, as compared with the Establishment principle, that it tends to produce and to maintain divisions.

they, too, have their halcyon moments when some seed appears to spring, some result dawns of labour, some realisation of Christ; and then they who were of all men the most miserable are most blessed. Christ they see to be risen. And if the martyrdom of such is real, so is their consolation. And "none but Christ" is a real and no canting cry. Christ has called them by their name, and if they have been buried, they have also risen with Him.

But is it fair to put so great a strain as this on the Christian ministry, that the very being and providence of God, and the revelation of facts of the life and death and presence of the Lord Jesus, should be put in question by its being left at times so destitute as to cry about so small a thing as maintenance, "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?" Should the ministry be made a provision for livelihood, and then put on so imperfect a basis in this respect as to bring the higher experiences of the Christian life to do duty for the lower? We cannot think so. Making Christian ministry a profession, and allowing it to be considered as such, and then subjecting it to such a strain as the voluntary system does,—all this is inadmissible and should not be risked.

There is, however, one great aspect of the voluntary system, which we believe is its true and fundamental aspect, and which cannot but be accepted and praised, viz., when it is absolutely voluntary, and when arrangements are made that it should be secured to continue such—that is, when its operations are in the way of thank-offerings or honest desires for the maintenance of the ministry and that only—when it is secured that this maintenance should be anonymous, and given and received by silent and unrecognisable offerings as to the sources whence derived; thus for-

bidding the entrance of false, and the feeling of unsuitable relations. Were this always a sufficient method, either in the maintenance of the strength of its principles or in regard to the means of localities, such a support would probably be the best which could be conceived; for instead of injuring it would benefit both the giver and the receiver. But it is scarce possible that it should continue anywhere in sufficient strength, and in most localities the means themselves are insufficient, while in places where the ministry has to *initiate* that which afterwards is to be its support, its application is impossible. When the voluntary system answers to its name and is indeed the expression of love, nothing can be better, and it cannot enough be commended as a system for the support of the ministry or aught else; but then, properly speaking, it is not a system, and a system is required to carry on that which can only be done by system, such as a continuous and parochial ministry; but love passes into duty, and desire into the righteousness of the law, and the voluntary system becomes involuntary and comes to an end. If the ministry is supported for its office's sake, and the gifts it receives are from an experience of its benefits, and it becomes the ocean for the river of love, then the position of such a ministry would be perfect. This, no doubt, is the true way, if it is to be connected with money rewards at all, in which the ministry should be connected. Of course this raises the question, if this be the true method, whether any other is admissible; and we think that, were it not that something seems to be requisite short of the highest aspect of the Christian ministry—something which will afford a continuous and general supply of what are called "the means of grace"—none other would be admissible. Such a position as we have described is only found in exceptional

cases and at rare intervals; whilst something is wanted which would carry on a system to a certain extent independent of individual feeling and opinion.

It is love which begets institutions, and then the institution itself steps in to recreate that love which gave it birth when the love grows cold. There is an oscillation from cause to effect, and from effect to cause; and the originating love (to which all is owing) must again be reproduced by the objective forms which itself produced ere it can descend to others, or be itself continued long in the human breast. For love must give birth to form, and form recall the early love, or give birth to new, else the original love itself will pass away. If it give no sign, and leave no sign, it is not, and has ceased to be. That sign can reproduce it of itself we do not think; but it is the representation of that which is or was, and, when understood, will produce that again. Love gives birth to institutions. But can they, it is asked, when but institutions, continue or reproduce love? Can anything be of a Christian ministry which is not love? Can the Church be built upon anything which is not this? Is not the very meaning of God and the Church, love and its outcomings? And is not any other action in it a departure from first principles? Are not all things other and less than love but substitutions and imitations of the real thing—artificial flowers without root or smell, without seed or offspring? And as such parents are, will not their offspring be? Anything the product of apparatus will be but apparatus—dead, mechanical, and without true life. No system can be the father of a living child; no living father the parent of a system. Love alone begets life, and is life. No doubt this is true; nevertheless, from the letter life does flow, and we must have the letter. How many has

not Holy Scripture alone begotten to a higher life? Some apparatus, then, and objective forms, must be conceded.

There is an aspect of support for the Christian ministry which we have not as yet considered, and a very important aspect—one which, if Establishments were discontinued, and the voluntary system disapproved of, would, we think, come largely in to supply their place. We speak of endowments. It is probable that, from a diversity of causes, the present method of Establishments may go, and be superseded by endowments. We cannot think that the voluntary system will have a large acceptance, except perhaps with the commercial classes. It may suit their habits of thought and experience, as it does, for this reason, the habits of the Americans, with whom it is the predominant method of support; but we do not think it will ever have a large acceptance in this country. Here the strength of the voluntary system lies in the principle of *Dissent* (with which it is generally coupled), and not in the strength of the principle itself. Direct payment for religion is, we think, alien to the feelings of a majority in this country. It is otherwise with endowments. Endowments, in our opinion, will take the place of Establishments by the State, should these, as they now exist, be discontinued, especially in country places—in those, at least, where a parish church has long existed and been frequented. The Church of England, we believe, would be practically established again by way of endowments by the piety of individuals. There are few, who have it in their power, who would not go great lengths to maintain the Church of their fathers in their own locality, and who would not exert themselves to have it permanently settled there, as they had been accustomed to it before. There are many who would like to hand down

to, and provide for, their children, the blessings and privileges which they had themselves enjoyed, and to secure for the poor and untaught the advantage of a true and gratuitous religion. Many, no doubt, would have a just and noble pride in doing this, and some would like, in their native place, to have such deeds permanently associated with their names. Nor, moreover, would such work, nor need it, be confined to the rich, or but to one or two in the parish. As it would commend itself to many, so it might be partaken in by all in various degrees. Larger or smaller offerings could equally be made, and legacies also would be left of varied amounts. Maintenance and a ministry of a permanent order would thus be secured, and that of a higher aspect than one dependent upon what, after all, is but a higher form of charity. This would also insure the carrying on of divine worship without contamination of its purity and due solemnity by requests for and collections of money. Along with this mode of provision, that branch of the voluntary system which we have called the anonymous, or silent system, might be added in places where either the endowment was deficient, or it was expedient to take advantage of a transitory congregation; and such offering might be made possible at all religious assemblies, care being taken that it should be *bonâ-fide* secret and voluntary, as giving a suitable opportunity for the outgoing and expression of love towards the divine worship and its ministry. This, no doubt, as a mode of expressing thanks, is one which ought not to be overlooked. In such offering this advantage is retained, that the element of personal feeling as to individuals to be benefited is greatly got rid of; a gift laid on the altar both is free from responsibility and from the feeling of

personality; the responsibility is sunk in the pleasure and duty of the offering, and the feeling of personality is lifted up into the region where the gift lies. Of course discrimination is needed and right; but the chief feature will be reference to the divine source and object, and not to the immediate agent. Such gifts are felt to be free both from interested and degrading associations, and have everything to recommend them; but they cannot be looked upon, save in exceptional cases and places, as being anything but an aid, and not the real foundation for the temporal maintenance of the Christian ministry.

These are the chief methods whereby the Christian ministry has been maintained in times past in this country. They are methods by which it may be maintained in future. Whether by any of them, or by all, or by any combination of them, it is to be supported in the future, the future alone can tell. The ministry itself is not dependent on any of them. In itself the ministry is entirely unconnected with temporal provision. It stands clear of it, and is probably better *per se* without it. That the ministry should form, as now it does, a separate and special profession supported by temporal provision, is, no doubt, a strange and abnormal position for the Church and for Christianity, and a proof that the triumph of both is as yet but far off. It is a strange and abnormal condition that Christianity should have become a profession and means of livelihood—a condition altogether unlike its first and true conditions, whether we look at its own nature or that of its Divine Founder. The Revelation of Jesus Christ, and this continued by His disciples, whether merely by declaration or sealed by sacraments, can in no true way be conceived of as connected with or rewarded by money. In its

earliest conditions such reward was not the object of its Apostles, who not only afforded what they had gratuitously, but were ready to submit to the loss of all things, even of life itself, rather than not afford them. The need of, or a complaint as to the sufficiency of, temporal provision, was a matter which assuredly never entered into their minds. It may be that the loss of all things, and not the gain of anything, was necessary for its first foundation; and the question may be asked whether it is not necessary for it always, even to the end, whether the slow progress of Christianity may not have been owing to the reversal of these early conditions. If we look at its first estate of want and persecution, and at the same time its real prosperity, the question cannot but arise whether another and opposite position may not only not be necessary, but have been actually injurious to it. That the ministry should become a business or profession by which a man may live, cannot, we think, but be injurious to it. When it becomes (as in the voluntary churches) a horse which a man has to construct to carry him, and which otherwise is not existent, there cannot be a doubt, we think, that such a ministry is injurious to Christianity. And has not the Christian ministry, even apart from the voluntary system, almost become a question of money and of relative *values?* One living is pitted against another as "not so good" or "better," one kind and mode of ministry against another as higher, worldly honours and worldly dignities are associated with the ministry as such, and given in many cases for reasons altogether unconnected with its true nature. Can we doubt but that evil is the result? Yet it does not follow that maintenance from without, and some worldly advantages, should not be given to it, notwithstanding the abuses of

them, which are, alas, too many. For some reasons abundance and high place are useful to its officers, if they would make a good use of them; and there is no reason probably in the nature of things why they should not. It is important that the whole mass of society should be leavened with Christianity; and access can scarce be had to all places without a certain amount of wealth and rank. Again, if gifts, whether large or small, be offered for Christian objects, it is difficult and might be improper to refuse them. For certain works of the ministry too wealth and rank are not only not detrimental but needful. No doubt, if we consider but the abstract conveyance of the Gospel, this to a great extent can now be accomplished by impersonal agency; but the outward assembling and being of the Church, the administration of the sacraments, the teaching of the poor and illiterate, and missions to the heathen, cannot be accomplished without a personal ministry. And the poor and illiterate in most cases comprise the great bulk of a population, and are therefore the main field of the Christian ministry. For exceptional spheres, the zealous, the gifted, and the devoted, will always be found, and will either supply them without aid from other sources or with only such as kindred spirits are willing and able to supply; but this is ever an accidental and limited aspect, and neither the ordinary need nor the ordinary supply intended to be offered by the Church and received by mankind. How to continue and improve the ordinary aspect of things, that which now exists, and to some degree is now supplied, is the question before us.

What we have first to think of, and how it is to be maintained, is the ordinary service of the Church, the duty of the daily and Sunday ministry. The ordinary duties of a town or country pastor—visiting the sick,

burying the dead, marrying, baptizing, preaching, praying—this work is ever wanted, and no doubt must in some sort of way ever go on and be continued, and in general be supported from without. How is it in future to be carried on? Changes are so great and so rapid, varieties of opinion increase so much, that the future and its provisions will not and cannot be as the past. The ministry must be provided for; and if this be not done in some general and united way we do not think that the office will be rightly discharged. If it is not to be provided for from without, the ministry, now that opinions are so varied, can only live by competition, disunion, and the exaltation of differences. A ministry at all, as we have said, supported from without and become a profession and livelihood, is no doubt abnormal. But looking at it when it has so assimilated a nation to itself as to have its rites and ordinances become part and parcel of the life of the nation, it is not only not then abnormal, but has become the normal, for it is the highest and deepest portion of the nation's being. As we have said, signs and rites are results, and cannot give life except in a secondary sense; but when they are signs of a present life, and are means of begetting and continuing that life in the reflex way of which we have spoken, they are not to be lightly cast aside, but to be cherished, and maintenance provided for their continuance. Without these Christian society in such a case would not go on. When a State has arrived at that condition that no little one is allowed to enter upon life without the addition of the Christian name, no marriage, no burial to take place without the invocation of Christ's name and spirit and power, granting that this is but the sign of that which ought to be, yet, as it is the sign of it, and in many cases the way to it, surely such

a condition, when such an elevation is reached, should not be at once abandoned. Such Christian rites and signs touch men at their highest and purest moments, and lead them on to higher and better; they and the nation would be infinitely poorer when and where they were abandoned. Such means are among the purest and highest which can be used for the elevation of any country, and surely they should not be lightly cast aside. Such things are the seed-plots and element out of and in which the better spirit of the nation is developed and grows; without them a descent to blank paganism would be the consequence. Such duties might be performed by multitudes of little men performing the rites for multitudes of little churches; but neither one Church, State, or Christianity, would be the consequence, nor one general effect, aspect, and spirit of Christianity. And it is this which is mainly valuable for a country; one spirit by one faith and truth. In the main Christians are at one. If the ministry were at one, or maintained as one, this spirit and aspect would be retained and increased among us. By abandoning the ministry or one united aspect of it, the loss to the countries would be much greater than we may at first suppose. With all its shortcomings the Christian ministry has done great things for the world, and often it has been the light of the world and the saviour of society. Even when well endowed it has not generally been embraced from motives of gain. Most do not do their work because they are the clergy, but became clergy to do the work. Men more spiritually-minded than their brethren, or even but more æsthetic and artistic, and the more self-devoted and unselfish, such as do not care for the things of the world, are those who naturally in the tear and wear of the world wish to be, and who become, the clergy.

It is not unfair to say that much of the civilisation of which we now boast, and of the "sweetness and light" to which we have attained, has been produced not only by Christianity, but by the Christian ministry; and farther, that the teaching and ordinances of the Church have been the most civilising agencies of the last eighteen hundred years. The loss of the clergy, and even of their status and work as now existing in England, would be great. What would be the result of any great change in this respect, were the present general aspects of the Church and ministry, or even one predominant Church—the Church as now established in England — to disappear? First, we should lose the general observance of the Lord's-day, or Sunday; then there would be no common parish church with its own churchyard; our parish bells would be silent with their heavenly summons—a note which gives the key-tone to the week, a sound which gives rest to the weary both of man and beast; the Sunday of which George Herbert sings would have vanished—

> "O day most calm, most bright,
> The fruit of this, the next world's bud,
> . . . . . care's balm and bay;
> The week were dark but for thy light:
> Thy torch doth show the way.
>
> "Sundays the pillars are
> On which heaven's palace archèd lies:
> . . . . . .
> . . . . . .
> On Sunday heaven's gate stands ope;
> Blessings are plentiful and rife,
> More plentiful than hope."

For a sanctuary a ministry is needed; without a settled ministry our churches would be closed and go into decay. Baptisms, burials, marriages, and the Supper of the Lord, as now common among us, would be so greatly changed as to be no bonds of union, if they did not

ultimately disappear. The signs of the old ministerial office, the outward badges of Holiness to the Lord, of "light and perfections on the breast," harmonious bells below, "raising the dead," if in any shape they remained as now in their old familiar forms, would have practically vanished away; and above all that blessed pastoral and parochial office and care which, exercised as it now is, is the stay and glory of the parishes of England, would be dislocated and at an end. The rector of the parish, in his post which now gives him an introduction and welcome everywhere, and all in the parish a claim upon him, the parson comforting, the parson in sacraments, the parson blessing, the parson happy in himself and the cause of happiness in others, realising the sweet peace of his office and the sacredness of his work, his ears full of the chimes of heaven, his house and its belongings sanctified by their dedication, his daily service, the matins and even-song, the music of the sanctuary, its chants and hymns, its holy choir, and sacred seasons—Advent, Christmas, Good Friday, Easter (once the portion of all)—would have lost their common character, if visible anywhere. The old church and its graves of the parish household, the font where they were baptized, the altar at which they were married and communicated, with all that linked chain which binds us all day by day together and lifts us up to holiness and to God, all would have again been drawn up into the heaven from whence they came, leaving the earth cold and dark. The ambassadorship for God is no vain office; its title alone is significant of its value, of a value which would leave us so much poorer were it away. The ambassador brings an accredited message from another world, he brings a strength to give us victory over

the lowering circumstances and anxieties of this. He bears about with him the atmosphere of a higher region, in which as he himself dwells, so he knows its reality and can give it to others. Knowing and coming from the Most High, by his knowledge of the Most High, he can tell what the Most High is. Living in pure atmosphere, he himself is pure, and is calm, as living above all hindrances, the fear of loss, the fear of death, and, that which is still more formidable, the fear of death and loss to those more precious than himself. He is to men that which no other and lower thing can supply. It is his office to be and do all this. No doubt the benefit will depend upon the reality which the office is to himself. But this we must take for granted; we must take for granted that he obtained the office because he first had its spirit. This must be seen to and secured in every possible way to make the office something more than a name. Here we cannot, however, go deep into the means whereby this can be done. But to some extent it is possible; and to a great extent it is possible to do so more than is now done. We shall not here go into the question of hereditary offices, successions, and its kindred questions; we are but speaking of office and its functions *de facto*, and must suppose its right discharge by a ministry whose business it is to preach the Gospel and to administer the ordinances of religion, and whose life is so really based upon that of their divine model, that without self-evident impropriety they can say, "Be ye followers of me." To be able to say this some official mark we believe is needed, for no one without it dare use such language; it is no doubt based first upon reality, then on the official right to make the claim heard. We are speaking of an office, not of an order. We do not believe in the intrinsic

virtues of hereditary office—that is, of any separate caste or order in Christianity. Yet are we far from thinking that a divinely appointed and hereditary ministry has no foundation in an historical sense; we think it has, and that the fact is not without its value, were it for no other reason than that such a line supplies a line of substantial proof for the occurrence of the outward facts on which their ministry is founded, and of which they are the testimony and exponents. In this sense a ministerial succession is of value, and should be cherished. When, however, on the ground of a succession, intrinsic value is claimed for operations, and preternatural effects are ascribed to rites, which are supposed to work irrespective of and contrary to the ordinary laws of nature, it becomes an evil, and is indeed subversive of true Christianity. Some such attitude as this it must have pained many observers to have seen of late assumed by not a few clergy of the Church of England. It is not difficult to see how the error arose. Such consequences were not attached to similar operations in common life, because the result of the operations are seen there; unfortunately in spiritual operations the results were often relegated to another world, it did not require that the effects should be seen here, and therefore a result might be attributed which was required, but which need not be seen here. The colonel of a regiment, for example, by his word of command, seems to perform a magical operation, when by the use of certain words he makes the arms and legs of his men to rise and fall in the ranks; but it is not attributed to magic, because it is seen that it is the natural result of the use of appropriate words spoken by the proper person for the purpose; the act is seen to flow out of the reception of the meaning of the word. But in the

ministry it came to be held that the use of a word effecting no visible result here did effect a result in virtue of the office which made use of it somewhere; a power was ascribed to the word, and a position given to the office which was purely magical and sacerdotal. A misunderstanding of the nature of spiritual truth lies at the bottom of the assumption. The risk of this misconception and the errors consequent upon it are by no means small at this moment in England, and a false conservatism has a tendency to encourage it as protective of religion, while, in truth, no one thing in the history of Christianity has more contributed to its discomfiture, and it is to this one cause that the Church of the middle ages, and now of Italy, Spain, and France, owe their overthrow. The spread of this feeling among ourselves, and some other causes to which we shall now advert, make the prospects of the Christian ministry in this country more doubtful than otherwise they would be.

There is a declension both in the numbers and in the standing of those who present themselves for the ministerial office; and it cannot be doubted but that the decreased prospect of a sufficient maintenance has something to do with this. This, in one sense, is a sad and bad spiritual sign; for it is well said that he who is in love does not fear the cold. If all were really in love with, and sufficiently impressed with, the objects of the Christian ministry, questions of maintenance would sink into a very secondary aspect. Were the office seen aright, and God known as He ought to be—if it were realised what it is to be ambassadors for God—there would be ministers enough, and no demand for pay. That prayer which Christ offered for His disciples, "That they may be one even as we are one," surely claims and conveys a double meaning and blessing

for His ambassadors. To have our life hid in Christ's, as Christ's is in the Father's, — that Christ who disclosed His life to us that we might hide our lives in His, and who forestalled our death by dying,—is it true that there is need of a demand for more pay for His ambassadors? All Christians are called to union with them, yet a double portion of the call and blessing is surely the portion of His ministry. And is there a sufficiency of such? The cessation of demand for the ministry seems to show that there is not that apprehension of the high and true meaning of the divine call which there ought to be. Modes of provision cannot be seriously considered in connection with this; higher things come in, and we are called to look at them. What, then, have we at this moment to consider? What is the meaning of the pause to which we have been brought? Is it really a question of provision which is before us, or a question of the ministry itself—of the ministry as a separate and stated profession and as a means of livelihood, and particularly in this latter aspect? The propriety of a money connection with the Gospel is not obvious. It was not the original foundation: the ministry never can be adjusted to trade principles. May it not be that when so many rapid and radical changes are taking place everywhere, the ministry itself may be about to be recast? Old things are passing away, and all things becoming new. Is this to be among them? The social changes at present are great, sudden, and complete; are there to be similar changes in the Church also? The earth is changed and renewed, often by sudden catastrophes; is this to be the case with the Church? New things are made out of old, they are not altogether new; is this to be the way with the ministry? It has already seen many

changes—purity, superstition, reformation;—is something similar, or greater, now before it and the Church also? The germs of change are hid, unseen, invisible; the result is visible and seen. Of the hidden and deep-seated workings of the mind which have been at work in later years it is probable that some outer results will sooner or later be visible; and the Church is eminently the region of the mind. Everywhere at present the mind is thrown back upon first principles, it can find no holding save in the nature of things, or in its own nature. Conventionalisms, terminology, logical deductions, are interrogated for their meaning, and if they have none, or none sufficient, are passing away. The nature, not the name, of the Living God is demanded; it is the time of the struggle of Jacob and the angel. Men do not get the name without search, difficulty, and loss—until they halt upon their thigh. A new spiritual world and Church are rising, new but made out of the old, being the *meaning*, in fact, of the old—the sword which was in the scabbard. Man is being brought into direct connection with God; agencies are being removed. The decline of the Papacy, the severance of the Church from the civil power, a closer unity with and apprehension of nature as God's will, are all before and with us now. Old things are undoubtedly passing away, whatever the new are to be. It is possible that the Christian ministry itself may pass away in the fulfilment of that for which it was instituted, the knowledge of God becoming universal, God becoming the teacher Himself according to the promise, "They shall be all taught of God." It may be that the Church and Ministry are about to assume a more perfect form. In some respects this is indispensable for their continuance; for the new world has got so far beyond the old that the old methods will not

apply or keep pace with it, and must be renewed. The human spirit is now being approached in so many and more powerful ways than of old,—the press, the telegraph, photography,—and in similar ways the spirit of man is being so much more largely and directly approached than was possible before, that it may be that the things of God are about to be, and require to be, given to us in some more direct and impressive method. We are not prepared to say it is not so, nor are we prepared to say that it is. Meanwhile, a feeling of change and need of helps beyond those we have or had is everywhere experienced.

Things must be adapted to their changing use, and ministries among the number, if they would hold a true connection up between that which does and that which does not change. Revelation and God themselves are no doubt unchangeable; neither God, nor the Revelation of God, as seen in Christ, can change, whatever may be changed in the *method* of their Revelation; but while they cannot change, the method may and does. That which was revealed in Christ cannot change or be changed—on that the Church is built; she is called out of the world to be built on that; the foundation cannot change, but she may be differently built upon it. That which was seen of God in Christ was a Revelation of the Eternal, of that which is eternal; that revealed must be eternally the same, but the method of its revelation may be different. That which we see of God in Christ is the true God, and the eternal life; no other eternal life is possible. A clearer vision may be vouchsafed, although a vision of no other thing, but it may be differently conveyed to us. The Revelation of God in Christ proves itself divine by that which it is. It is that which ought to be in God, that which our highest and best instincts teach us, when

they are at their highest, our love and reverence; and no doubt that which ought to be *is* in the Most High, and is the Most High. What that is and ought to be, we know from that which ought to be in ourselves, but too often is not; we doubt not that it is in Him. It was that which was revealed in Christ. This is our rest for ever. On this the Church takes her stand; that He is this, and how He manifested it, is that which she has to show unto the world. This she is to show unto the end of the world, until, that is, all the world is gathered into her, and becomes the Church, and she delivers the kingdom to the Father, and God is all in all. Her work may be varied, but in kind it is ever the same; the old agencies may no longer be wanted from their results having been attained. But that time, however, has not yet come, and so far as we can see it is still far off. We are as yet but at the outer courts of the future kingdom; we have to go farther and higher, apparently by following the old rule and minding the old things. It would seem that we have rather to regenerate and remodel and recast than to cast away, to gather up the fragments that remain rather than to throw them away. The ministry, the Churches, the provisions of the past, apparently ought rather to be reconstructed than destroyed. The ministry has had its shortcomings, but it would not do for us to sweep it away. It may seem a small thing to consider the question of its form and maintenance in the midst of so many greater and apparently more pressing questions; but this is also in truth a great and necessary consideration which cannot well be postponed. And to many this is the work which is most bounden upon them, and their own circumstances make it an immediate question. What, then, is to be done? What is that which ought to be our policy

as to the present position of the Church and its ministry in England? Matters should perhaps be left much as they are if three points were secured; that the ministry should have its maintenance for its work, not its work for its maintenance; that some arrangement should be come to whereby a larger variety of opinion and method of church government should be represented; and, finally, that the bestowal of office should be vested in fit hands.

The first principle to be secured is, that the objects of the ministry should be the first thing, its maintenance the second; that where provision is made, it is to be as a means for labour, and not the labour as a means to it; the aspect of the ministry as a profession, or means of livelihood, should be, as far as possible, got rid of. How this is to be effected is not easily seen. It cannot be effected by apparatus; the right spirit of the ministry is the main thing, but this cannot be obtained by arrangements. It may, however, be possible to arrange that none but those who have a right spirit shall be chosen. Lowering the standard of maintenance will do nothing toward this; it only brings forth, where the spirit is defective, a demand for the office from those of a lower social scale. The only real method is to raise the tone of the Church. This, if sufficient, would make the holding of office, save for the spirit and purposes of office, impossible; and if this went forth, then such arrangements could be made as would prevent the appointment to office of those not duly qualified. Were the Church herself to "try the spirits" of those who sought her offices, it would be scarce possible that an improper choice would be made. The Church herself might act by delegates in each locality—delegates who should represent the whole body of believers there. These, as knowing best that which they

wanted, would best represent the mind of the Church. Provision for the maintenance of the ministry, we think, should be made by the State, the selection for office by the Church herself in every various place. Let the Church's appointed overseers prepare her candidates for office, and let the appointment to office afterwards rest with the Church herself. Every parish might act by a committee representing the members of the Church there; these should select from those whom the proper officers have prepared the person or persons whom they think most qualified for the post then vacant. Objections might and would be found, as to everything of a similar nature where many are concerned in one operation; but as the method works well in secular affairs, we do not see why its operation should be different when applied to the affairs of the Church. There is no other method, of which we are aware, which would put so formidable a check upon that which is the real difficulty of the case—place sought for its provision and not for its work. Nor do we know any other method which so well tests the spirit and capacity of the candidate, and gives assurance as to the true object which he has in view. That which alone is of great importance in the ministry is the spirit in which it is entered, and the object for which it is sought. One or other spirit makes all the difference in the character of the work. In the ministry the true work is not done at all if the true spirit is a-wanting. The difference between having and not having it, makes a difference in the work of the ministry wide as the poles, both in the manner and matter of the work. It is so as to office in secular things, how much more in spiritual! It is the first thing to attend to in the distribution of office. We see this difference finely set forth in a passage in one of those

remarkable, and, indeed, marvellous tales of MM. Erckmann-Chatriain. Good would it be for our youth and the youth of all nations, but more particularly of France, if they were made familiar in their schools with works such as these, instead of with the puerilities and profligacy of so much of pagan literature, of which the useless and deteriorating effects are only mitigated, but not prevented, by the early age at which they are taught. Had such books as the Erckmann-Chatriain novels been used instead, Europe could scarce have had so much of those sad enmities which have so often taken those vast and vain-glorious forms which have ruined the nations, and which at this moment are so terribly triumphant.

"Vos généraux dans le temps, je m'en souviens, se battaient pour la liberté, ils couchaient sur la paille, dans les granges comme de simples soldats: c'étaient de terribles hommes! Maintenant il leur faut des canapés, ils sont plus nobles que nos nobles, et plus riches que nos banquiers. Cela fait que la guerre, la belle chose autrefois—un art, un sacrifice, un dévouement à la patrie—est devenue un *métier* qui rapporte plus qu'une boutique. C'est toujours très-noble, puis qu'on porte des epaulettes, *mais il y a pourtant une difference entre se battre pour des idées éternelles et se battre pour enricher sa boutique.*"—"The Conscript" (edition 1867, p. 41).

Yes, the difference is eternal. And it is equally or rather more terribly deadly when the principle is carried into spiritual things, and the ministry is embraced merely as a livelihood, or what is called a "comfortable livelihood."

It may be that ecclesiastical things are to be made wholly new; it may be that they are to be taken out of the past as Eve from Adam. The last, perhaps, is the most probable.

Starting from the old foundations, from the foundations then which we now have in England, and regenerating these, is probably that which it is best to do, and that which is before us to do. For many a year to come, no doubt, in England a settled and localized ministry, especially in country places, will be requisite. But times are changing so fast, so few realise the blessings which they have in this respect, and so many varieties of opinion exist and are being developed into other aspects, especially on the subject of religion, that it is perhaps all but impossible to expect that that which we now have should be continued as it is; in many respects it is not desirable that it should, for no doubt great improvements are needed and new adaptations. But at all events it is easier to improve and make new adaptations than to commence *de novo* or alter fundamentally our work. The Establishment, as it is at present, will not meet the needs of the present and future time without not only great inprovements in the internal mode of administration, but also great additional breadth being taken in of denominational aspects. This, we believe, could be accomplished without any violation of fundamental principles; and the united or federal bodies might form as it were one national or Christian Church. The preservation of past historical facts and their interpretation must ever have relation to the increasing spiritual light of the time, which will require provision for new developments if genuine outgrowths of the original tree. This to some extent has taken place already, but without adequate provision being made, so that unity is only preserved by a violation of conscience, and loss is sustained by the secession of those who cannot so conform. But new arrangements might without difficulty be made, if some among the ministry would agree to consider

themselves as making but a subscription of the best they had to Christianity, instead of demanding or supposing an exclusive altar of one pattern, and if others would agree to unite their suffrages with their brethren as one Church and nation, although they might not feel at all points in unison. While based on one foundation, and obtaining support according to their needs, it might be without difficulty arranged that every one should have that form which best suited and expressed his convictions (wherever, that is, a sufficient number presented themselves), while they were in a real but federal union of communities, yet forming but one Church, as now is America and her States. No doubt some original basis must be decided on which all receiving benefit should come under obligation to accept, interpreted say by some joint tribunal of Church and State in one; but so one body might be established, although with many members and different ministries, which would supply the Christian element with all its blessings to the State. Were this done, Establishments of religion, with all their undoubted blessings, might be continued for many a day. Were it now entered upon in England, we believe that in that country at least, from its great practical and other advantages, matters as to the Church of England in her parochial aspects would remain much as now they are and were before. Dissenters would not perhaps come in, but they would be in friendly and federal union; both parties would be chapels of relief to each other and to difficulties of conscience. Establishments of religion by the State we think very important; but save in the way of the federal union of denominations in one Church we do not see now, in our days, how they can be secured. To effect this little is needed but the abandonment of exclusive claims on the one hand, and

acceptance by the other of a provision which thus received can compromise no principle of Christianity at all. Only those who have no experience of the difficulties and degradation of the voluntary system, or no sufficient value for the presence of religion in a country, are likely to oppose. "A free Church in a free State" is a captivating term, which has been brought into use by nations which, having no experience of real Christianity, and finding that so long as the Church of Rome was established among them they were in bondage, bethought themselves of the cry as a means of getting rid of the Church of Rome. Whether, in the event of such an Establishment as we have proposed, the Church of Rome should form part of it in this country, whether she would accept the terms, whether if she did she should be accepted, is a question we should have great difficulty in deciding. On the one hand, no doubt the Roman Church must be accepted as some form of Christianity, and therefore its members resident in England, were the plan above proposed carried into effect, would have a right to have their ministry provided for. But again, when we look at the past history, and especially the later history, of the Church of Rome, with the syllabus and infallibility, and remember that Romanism does not so much mean a form of religion as a corporation under the government of a foreign and irresponsible head, now declared infallible, an alien and antagonistic power at all times in every State, it becomes a grave question whether such a form of religion does come under the aspects of Christianity, whose kingdom is expressly declared not to be of this world. As to other denominations, we do not see why a federal union of them as one Church, with or in a State, should be injurious to the freedom of either Church or State. There would be a

tie, but it would, we believe, be more of a support than a bondage to either, and without some such union we cannot see how either can be perfect. A true Church is the expression of the spirit and soul of the State, of its higher thoughts, morals, and aspirations. As a man, who is the working and coarser portion, is incomplete without a wife, so is the State without the Church; and in the same way the wife, the more tender and spiritual, is incomplete without the help of the ruder half. One in will, in other things they are different; but the two portions are required to form a perfect whole. Church and State are as the soul and body, the male and female to one another, the two portions of a nation mutually necessary to each other to complete the whole and to make a perfect unity; for unity is not oneness, but completion.

A truly national Church, such as we have described, combining and representing the various aspects of Christian thought and worship in a nation, (for nothing less than this is a truly national Church), and united with the nation, is a perfect Church. Apart from such connection the Church becomes stunted and deformed; as also a State without provision for the utterance of its higher thoughts and without spiritual companionship becomes little more than a dumb and brutal labourer, alive in name, but really dead to the higher interests. The labour of the State preserves the grace and freshness of the Church, while the counsels and consolation of the Church preserve the State from sinking into an animal and coarse routine. The converse and cordials of the one repay the food and maintenance of the other. So has it been in England for many a day, and so may it long continue, with such adaptation and regeneration as the new times require. In such a work of provision for spiritual

progress and maintenance we have a great work before us —a work in which both the great parties of Liberal and Conservative can alike take part. It is a work in which both may find expression for their thoughts—a work which has been that of the wisest and best in all times gone by, but which ever has to be renewed and reconstructed from time to time. The first work of a Christian missionary in converting a pagan nation is to endeavour to connect its rulers with the faith; that is, to couple together Church and State, religion with the government of the land. We have long ago got as far as this in this country, and long realised the blessings which the union brings,—long may we continue to do so! Instead of throwing away the vestment when it gets too small, we should enlarge and adapt, not destroy it, fit it for the needs of the day and the growth of ideas, and not believe we are better without dress at all. We do not believe that the dissolution of the old and present connection of Church and State will be for the advantage of revealed religion, or of the people as a whole. On the contrary, we believe that the disruption would be injurious to both; that it would be injurious to the State and not beneficial to the Church.

The Christian ministry, if it is to be exercised at all on the understanding that it is maintained from without, cannot be adequately or advantageously exercised, we believe, on the provision alone which a varying will on the part of the people affords; in many localities, even were that will constant, the localities themselves do not afford an adequate provision, and in the most necessitous cases of spiritual need there is present no will at all for the supply of that which is wanted. In such cases that which is mainly wanted is that which is least sought, the Christian ministry

in its integrity. But we are not writing to exalt the Christian ministry. When we think of the history of Christianity, its slow progress, and particularly when we look at the condition of those kingdoms wherein the ministry has been longest exercised and most powerful, as in Italy, France, and Spain, one is half inclined to believe that, had it not been for the shortcomings of its ministers, Christianity would now have been in a very different state. The ministry itself has no inherent evil or objection to be taken against it. On the contrary, when it is pure and apart from all false conceptions, it has exercised and exercises an incalculable influence for good. In England, Scotland, Holland, Switzerland, and America, it has been at the head of all moral and intellectual progress from the time of the Reformation, and in some of these countries it was the parent of their present civil liberties. No doubt, in some of these States, a stereotyped aspect of the ministry has arisen, not dissimilar, in many of its aspects, to the sacerdotal, or that resting on authority instead of light, which has gone so far to destroy the value of the ministry in previous ages and in other countries; but this cannot long resist the influences of light pouring in from all quarters, which, from the state of civilisation at which we have arrived, cannot now be put back or withheld. Ministers must now be ruled by the light, or vanish before it. They cannot now, as was once the case, rule light by their own authority. This place they obtained by being at one time the light of their age; but not proceeding onwards, the light of their age becomes the darkness of the succeeding, and must give way before it. Such evils are not inherent in the ministry, nor inevitable accompaniments of it, but are corruptions, arising from human imperfection, and foreign

to its real nature, from which, from time to time, it must be cleansed and cleared. In itself it has no connection or necessity for being connected, with these things. The Holy Ministry—for it is a holy thing; "I magnify my office"—in its reality and truth is, no doubt, the highest thing on earth; for it treats of, and deals with, *the* Most High. Its region is the heavenly. It stands on a rock, above all stormy seas and currents; it is a lighthouse in the dark, an observatory holding converse with the stars, a hand held down from above, an ambulance for the wounded, a cordial for the dying, an angel to the mourners at the door of the sepulchre. What is like unto it? And when we find it both accustomed and expected to offer itself at every door, and at solemn intervals, not only without check or hindrance, but with every advantage of time and place, address itself, on the highest and most necessary themes, to the most educated and excellent, the purest and most refined, as well as the more thoughtless and evil and indifferent, no State or Church, one would be disposed to think, would lightly throw away so admirable an instrument of utility, so powerful and needful for the best interests of humanity. And besides this, although the sins and shortcomings of some of the clergy have been very great, particularly in connection with the office they held, yet they have been, as a class, superior in motive and conduct to the rest of mankind. It stands to reason that it should be so; for if we look alone at the motives which induced them to adopt the ministry for their career, it is evident that this choice itself indicated a more tender and spiritual mind than is the average, and a less selfish nature; since, on the whole, no one choosing a profession which, as a rule, leads to so little of worldly gain, and is so entirely occupied with

the very affairs of others, can be selfish or very worldly. The unseen and the eternal must have occupied a more than average portion of the thoughts of such men. Even to those of them who were less spiritual, literature and science owe much. No doubt, many of them have climbed to high world's honours, and achieved great worldly wealth, by means of Christ; yet many have had these things thrust upon them, and were rather hindered than helped by their access. Many, on the other hand, have descended from high and rich estate to the common and more ordinary aspects of the ministry, and have been, in so doing, the salt of the earth and lights to the world. We cannot but call those the salt of the earth and lights to the world who sacrifice the seen for the unseen, the temporal for the eternal, and who put the spirit above the letter,—seekers and teachers of the truth, applied in its most useful forms to the various needs of man.

THE END.

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[VI.]

PRESENT-DAY PAPERS ON PROMINENT QUESTIONS IN THEOLOGY.

THE RELATION OF KNOWLEDGE TO SALVATION.

THE RELATION OF KNOWLEDGE TO SALVATION,

AND THE PLACE OF KNOWLEDGE IN RELATION TO THE CHRISTIAN SACRAMENTS.

THE object of this Paper is to preserve the thoughts of men qualified by their position and personal acquirements to form opinions which cannot be without permanent value to all who are occupied with serious and religious thought. Although the immediate occasion for these expressions of opinion has passed away, yet the subjects are such as must ever recur, in some form or other, in all times and places of religious inquiry, and cannot therefore fail to be interesting to anxious and intelligent minds.

The opinions alluded to are those of the present Archbishop of Canterbury, the Bishop of St. David's, the late Mr. T. Erskine, and Dr. J. MacLeod Campbell; they are some of the fruits of a correspondence which arose out of a Charge delivered by the editor of these Papers, in 1866, on the subject of "Materialism in Christianity," being a caution against gross conceptions of the Sacraments. The objections taken to the Charge in a friendly way are not given here at length, as they were merely in the sense of caution as to the letter of our articles and formularies on the sub-

ject of the Sacraments. The subjoined correspondence, however, is so valuable and remarkable that, although in some particulars not coincident with the views expressed in the Charge, it is gladly appended, as the sole object of the author and editor is to offer contributions to the discovery and possession of truth, and not by any means to suppress it, if at any time it seems to bear hard on private opinion. It would seem a thousand pities, that, however valueless the Charge itself—and here it is employed merely for the sake of that which it called forth—so much thought and experience as it elicited from such "Masters in Israel" should be unused, or but circumscribed to a very limited number.

Rightly to understand the question, it may be well as a preliminary to give the substance of the Charge, at least in its leading aspects. Its title may perhaps sufficiently set forth its import; but in a larger sense its object was to place in opposition Revelation on the one hand, as accomplishing salvation by imparting light, and ordinances supposed to impart and nourish spiritual life by material means, apart from intelligence, and in a way that is ineffable, and not to be comprehended by us.

It is probable that the language of the Charge is stronger than would be used in the treatment of the topics in an ordinary treatise or discourse, and there was moreover at the time, as it appeared to the writer, great need for distinctness, from the numerous secessions which had occurred, and were still going on, from the Church of England to the Church of Rome, mainly arising out of erroneous, and, as it seemed to him, materialistic views on the subject of the Sacraments.

It will be best to extract verbatim some portion of the Charge, which, with the following correspondence, may form some contribution to the history of the times, and also some memoirs *pour servir* in the future as guidances to those in similar conditions; for these are subjects of which the "Day" is ever "Present."

SUBSTANCE OF CHARGE FOR 1866.

"At present, thinking men throughout Europe are divided into three great classes:—1. Those who, not believing in the truth of Revelation, fall back for their religion on Providence, chance, or necessity; 2. Those who believe in Revelation, but suppose that its operation is by means of material substances operating with preternatural power; 3. Those who believe in Revelation, and attribute its operation to the intervention of the reason and conscience.

"As a rule, the hierarchical Churches range under the second head, and the non-hierarchical under the third.

"The Protestant Episcopal Churches of Great Britain, Ireland, and America, may be said to hold to both definitions; that is to say, there is representative language in their formularies which will adapt itself to either of the last two heads, and their clergy rank themselves respectively under the one or the other; but such union is only a mechanical juxtaposition, and cannot in truth be the *bonâ fide* constitution of these Churches, as the two conceptions are fundamentally opposed.

"That conception which rests on a materialistic foundation is based, we believe, on the false premisses that the laws of Revelation are different in kind from the laws of nature,

and act in a different and arbitrary manner; that while the laws of nature are fixed and uniform, those of Revelation are not so, and are often a reversal of them; that, for example, while in nature we never find a spiritual result the product of matter, in Revelation, on the contrary, it is the rule. We do not speak of the miracles wherewith Revelation was at first accompanied, although indeed none of these are of this sort, but of the ordinary working, as is supposed, of the Sacraments, or of that which is called the Sacramental System. That there is no such account of them as this in Holy Scripture we are very sure. In it there is no notion of a material substance gaining access to the spiritual region. The laws of grace are set forth as the same in kind in their operation as the laws of nature, but only operating on a higher stage and for a higher object. They give us 'that which by nature we cannot have,' but only as the complement not the *bouleversement* of nature. A Revelation which supposed laws subversive of nature would render itself incredible by upsetting the basis on which its own credibility must rest. There is no account in Revelation of its ends being attained by magical or summary processes, which effect results *per saltum*, or in a way which reverses natural order. But a materialistic conception of the Sacraments starts with this supposition. They are supposed to effect their end, whatever it is, apart from all other agency, by their innate force and by their intrinsic efficacy. Thus we hear of the Baptism of children as being undoubtedly efficacious, because there is no 'opposing medium,' nothing to hinder its action; and we hear of the other Sacrament as a *viaticum* (*e.g.*, in the case of Count Cavour) *in articulo mortis*. But, as we

have said, there is no warrant in Holy Scripture for any such supposition, and all our experience of life and nature contradicts it. We thereby learn that matter and spirit are of different natures, and never pass the one into the other, or are capable of any kind of transmutation. For, as it is 'dust to dust' and 'spirit to spirit,' each must be approached by an avenue of its own kind; their respective food must be of a sort kindred to themselves, and have an entrance by its own channel. The body being nourished by the food which enters through the mouth, the spirit must be nourished by the food which enters through the mind; in other words, knowledge is to the spirit what bread is to the body. At the same time, while the regions of mind and matter are undoubtedly distinct, they are capable of acting and re-acting upon each other, healthily or unhealthily according to their sanatory conditions. Nevertheless their natures are different and not convertible, being held apart by an invisible barrier, which neither can overpass, so that the one cannot be transferred into the other.

"It might be supposed, looking at the spiritual nature of Christianity, that any attribution of its origin to matter would have been incredible. Unhappily true Christianity is frequently unknown; and so it has been easier to suppose a material origin, and to rule from that, than to see what Christianity should be, and to rule that a material origin was incompatible with its true conception. The only true connection which matter can can have with Christianity is one of association. This it has, and it is a legitimate connection; while it is from a false deduction that so many errors have arisen, more especially in connection with the Sacraments. The only relation

which Christianity can have with matter is one in accordance with its own nature. Christianity is entirely a spiritual thing, and can only be brought into connection with matter by historical, or other association. Thus connected, it may become so clothed, as it were, with that with which it is identified, as to be, in a sense, one with it. Yet in this case it is only one by means of the spiritual agency which knowledge infers; if this is not present, or has become false, the identity slips away and is no longer present, and the matter retains its original character. In truth it is but the knowledge which can in any way be received or obtain entrance into the mind. It is the knowledge, therefore, which is the real presence, which alone has with it the nature of Christianity, and is its only avenue or means of conveyance. The matter has no access to the spirit but by the mind—by the way, that is, of knowledge. No change has passed, or can pass, on the nature of the matter in the Sacraments so as to have access to the mind or spirit. It can but acquire a new character from being associated with knowledge; this has access; this, and this only, is the real presence, and is beneficent only just as it is apprehended or received.

"And this is at once evident when we consider what Revelation is. Its name implies its nature. It is a revealing or unveiling of what was hitherto unknown. It is a manifestation of the nature of God, because men required and were able to receive it. The things of a man are known to a man because he is a man; the things of God are also capable of being known by man, because he is in the image, and also a son, of God. The things of God are set before us because we are capable of knowing, and require to know

them, to obtain the benefit of them. The benefit can only come to us by knowing, because it consists in being made of one mind with God; in having His will revealed to us, and our will made so in unison with His will that we are at one with God. Revelation discovers to us what the character of God is, and shows it to be of such a nature that, when we understand it, we become enamoured of it, and the result is 'fellowship' or sympathy with Him. The revelation which effects this 'fellowship' is given to us in the face of Jesus Christ; that is to say, by our seeing that God is that which was manifested to us in the life and death of Jesus Christ.

"That this must be the mode we shall see when we consider what was the cause of Revelation. The reason for its bestowal was our need in regard to sin, which is the product of ignorance, and of false and perverted views in consequence. It was given to produce spiritual health, the cure of sin by means of removal of its primary cause—ignorance of God, and therefore of the prime good. Accordingly, Revelation has for its object to give us the knowledge of God, and that in such a way—while it is absolutely true also in itself—as to reconcile or win us to God and His will by the knowledge of what He is. It shows us, as we have said, God in the face of Jesus Christ; and we, seeing and believing and smitten by this Revelation, 'beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord,' are changed into the same image. This it effects by such a manifestation, and by our understanding and apprehension of it. God sets Himself before us in His Son living and dying for us. It is the revelation of what God is, of what He desires that we should become. It is the revelation of love and eternal self-sacrifice in God.

It is given that we might have the same law of life. It tells us that eternal truth is one; that He who sanctifieth, and they who are sanctified, are all of one; that Christ is to be the firstborn among many brethren. And the way is one, for God is one with it and in the same law of life as it is. This is the Divinity of Christ, and how we are to be divine. He has done a work in time which was in God from all eternity, which always is in God to do, for it is His eternal nature, and was only manifested in time because it was then required. He did it for our sakes, because we had need that it should be done; and yet, while for our sakes, it was in order that we should do it too. For, although it may appear strange, the happiness is in the doing of it, and not in the not doing of it. He did it that we might follow His steps, and so enter into the joy of the Lord. In the strength of His might and by the light of His life it is that we can do it. This is the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, which brings us into 'fellowship' with God and into a participation of the Divine nature, which is salvation, and which not to have is perdition for such as we, who were intended to have it, and formed on purpose. And our salvation is just in proportion to our conformity to the Divine likeness, and as our light so is our conformity. In the knowledge and love of His nature as seen in Christ we are able to adopt God's will, whether in action or in suffering, as the way and rule of life for ourselves. When we see the Divine nature in Christ, we can sacrifice our own wills, without any sense of loss, to God's will, and without imagining that our sufferings are in any degree well pleasing to God for their own sake—a view of self-sacrifice not uncommon, but wholly false in itself and unpleasing to God, nay, abhorrent—

suffering in doing God's will being undergone because we know by the light of the life of Christ that it is good for us, and therefore well-pleasing to God when we can say from the heart, 'Thy will be done,' 'Thine, not ours.'

"This is salvation, and it is the only true salvation, because while it saves us from desiring the impossible, it enables us to accept only that which is possible for our good. Knowing the nature of God by that which is revealed in Christ, we are assured that the things which are not seen in our lot must be interpreted by that which is seen in Christ—the unknown by the known;—and so we are saved by knowledge.

"If it be said that there is a healthy and happy state of the soul independent of knowledge, we believe that if we examine its roots, we shall find that it is not so, unless it be that happiness is restricted to the animal nature. The happiness of children, the pleasure which external beauty gives, the spirit of a book or picture, society, the delights of music, seem all, to a great extent, independent and apart from knowledge. Yet, if we look deeper, we find that it is not so. The child's happiness merely arises from a sense of security and love, which enables it to deal with the roots of our spiritual being; beauty, harmony, the spirit of a company, although they may be impassively absorbed, are all dependent on a mental process which is of the nature of knowledge, and recognises the fitness and proportion of things, and which can only be known to the lower animals so far as they attain to it by a similar process. And when we consider the songs of birds, such as those of the nightingale, it is impossible not to believe that birds are capable of exercising the same process to an extent beyond that which we generally assign to them.

"In relation to God, of course, there are vast continents of knowledge which must ever lie beyond our reach; but that which we do realise of God is dependent upon our knowledge.

"It is difficult to understand how any conception of our being able to be brought near to God in any other way than by knowledge of Him could have place, especially in connection with a Revelation of Himself, were it not a matter of experience that our higher or spiritual is ever apt to be drawn down by our lower or animal nature and degraded to its level, so that higher things come to be seen by the lower intelligence, and not the lower by the higher. Spiritual vision ever requires a certain amount of spiritual exertion, which is generally shrunk from; and something else, which comes without exertion, a materialistic or formalistic substitution in general, slips into its place. 'The flesh wars against the spirit,' and too often is successful in its war. 'The traveller unknown' is readily left unknown when we find that to hold him we must halt upon our thigh. The only strange part of this perversion is that the lower mind sometimes is supposed to be the higher. At this moment materialistic views claim to be accepted on the ground of their being higher than the other; and he who knows that the stars are worlds is relegated below the old woman who takes them for nails in the carpet of heaven. An acceptance of materialistic views seems to darken the spiritual nature, so that, by-and-by, it sees nothing, and complains that there is nothing to be seen, like the Roman soldiers in the Temple, who said the Jews were atheists because there was no image there; and the acceptance of materialistic views of Christianity in many countries, when

they were discovered to be untenable, has led to unbelief in any deity. A materialistic view cannot be tolerated therefore as if it were any portion of or way to the truth, because it not only is not so, but, when substituted for it, both deprives the receiver of all the good which the truth would have yielded to him, and gives him that which is positively destructive. For it cannot be doubted that the diversion of the spiritual intelligence into improper channels is first subversive of its own use, and then of the conduct and morality dependent on it. It is needful that we should be fully awake to this; because, from overlooking the fact, and from a false humility which substitutes authority for reason, we are not unlikely to lose all that the exertions of our forefathers gained for us at the time of the Reformation, and to see the very character and object of the Gospel itself overturned. A false humility, which makes us lean not on our own understanding, but on the understanding of others (and those no more gifted than ourselves), is likely to set aside the very kernel of Revelation—its call to us to know that we are the children of God, that this is the manner of God's love towards us, and that it is needful to know Him in order to apprehend this,—and to change it into a law and dispensation which is to place and keep us in the state of instruments and servants; a salvation which is no salvation, but the substitution of something which cannot save; materialistic *simulacra* of God, which hide the horror of their falsity in the hoariness of their age.

"Light has come into the world that we may see God and know and love Him; but a false humility, by means of cloudy names, "ineffable," "mysterious," and such like, is relegating us to darkness and perdition. For it is light

which alone can save us; salvation is ours only through union or "fellowship" with God, and is the product of sympathy and knowledge. It is by union and communion with God that we are saved, and this can be ours only through acquaintance with God. It is so in the lower, the material world; it is doubly so in the higher and spiritual world. We enter a darkened chamber, but what it contains we know not until a light is brought into it. So it is in the spiritual world. God is there, but until He is revealed and seen by us, what is He to us?—a name only. Seen by the light of Revelation, we can enter into "fellowship" with Him, and by such communion we are saved. So all-important are light and knowledge. Nay, here the light is of the nature of that which it reveals; it is the light of God—light as to what He is; so all-important, therefore, it is that it should come in a pure and unclouded stream to us. Formulæ, definitions intended to preserve or set forth the knowledge of God, have too frequently the opposite effect, from their artificial nature; "laying bare they seal." In this they often have the same effect as materialistic and substitutionary conceptions. And it is with these we have here to do. Darkness and mystery may produce fear, but they cannot produce love, and without love there is no salvation. Happy it is for us, that as is the knowledge, so is there cause for the love of God, and that our love will grow in proportion with our knowledge of Him; without it there can be no communion of the spirit, and so no spiritual salvation. What communion, for example, could we have with Shakespeare, who possess his body in the Stratford grave, compared to that which we obtain through the knowledge of his works?

"But materialistic views of Christianity are not confined to conceptions of the Sacraments; they extend to, if they do not arise out of, similar conceptions of the ministry which conveys them. A materialistic conception of the nature and power of the Christian ministry lies at the root of, if it be not the soil, out of which the materialistic views of the Sacraments spring. It is considered by some that, unless the ministry is derived by hereditary and unbroken succession from the Apostles, it is not a valid ministry. It is evident from this that those so believing hold that some materialistic substance is of the essence of Christianity. It is acknowledged on all hands that the Faith (as it is called) has not come down to us uninterrupted, for we say that 'the Church of Rome' (by which we received it) 'hath erred.' If a 'succession,' then, is needed, it must be because it is supposed to convey some necessary and materialistic substance. And to what straits does such a conception lead its holders lest they have it not; lest the succession *should* have been broken; lest the Church which gave it, but now excommunicates its holders, may thereby emasculate the virus! Alas, alas! Surely, life everlasting only comes by knowledge of the truth, and the standing of a ministry is not in its bodily descent, but in the truth of that which it teaches. If the ministry does not stand in this, it not only does nothing towards our salvation, but interposes and substitutes something in its stead. It leaves us to sigh and have nothing if it has no meaning for the spiritual ear, no light for the spiritual eye. It bids us enter into the joy of the Lord without our knowing in what that joy consists, for He himself is unknown. It relegates us to a dark idol and unknown God—a God who is not and can-

not be the subject of knowledge if He is identified with dead matter. If God be, as it is expressed, 'localized' in the Sacraments, instead of being present as a Spirit to our spirits (filling the whole as light fills a landscape, but taken in by our eyes individually), He who is a Spirit is present in no true sense at all to our spirits. And yet the materialistic is called God's real presence; His presence who cannot be present in one place more than another without destroying the essential conception of God, though He may be to us indeed as if it were so, but only by our realizing that presence to ourselves. But Revelation is a revelation of God, not of instrumentality; and an instrumentality, which but reveals itself, must hide God from us. Such may hide Him from us, but it cannot give Him to us. Nothing can do that which does not bring us spiritually near to Him. A ministry which takes its stand on anything other than or short of this, cannot be, and in so far is not, a true ministry, and falls short of its office as the herald or interpreter of the Gospel. Nay, a ministry which occupies itself greatly with the accidents of its own being is in a fair way to substitute something else for the real object of its mission, and the light which is in it is in danger of being changed to darkness. Then how great the darkness, the blind leading the blind! At present there is much of this. But we do not believe that the Gospel is in any real peril. Christ hath carried away the gates of hell, and amidst the present darkness a light is seen, and that increasingly, both higher in kind and in degree than anything we have had since the Apostolic age; a light as to the nature and character of God, and as to the methods of the Divine Government, which was unknown to the earlier ages,

and is scarce seen save in the inspired Apostolic writings. The Fatherhood of God, the revelation of the Father by the Son, the purposes of God for man, the uses of this life and of its consequences, the true rule of life and faith, are all being seen and commended to us in higher and larger measure than we or our fathers have ever seen, and we do not doubt but that this light will increase and swallow up the darkness until all men come to live by the word of God, finding the Father, and growing up into the likeness of Jesus Christ, until all other facts and ideals of humanity are suspended and swallowed up in this, and the true man and the true humanity shall alone be seen and reign according to the word, 'Yet will I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion,' a king and kingdom which can alone come, as it came to Christ, by the world knowing, as now it knows not, the Father, and the kingdoms of the world become the Kingdom of Christ by this knowledge, their inhabitants becoming individually Christ-like, so that the true king and kingdom may come, by the transubstantiation of individuals and such a taking of the manhood into God, as shall lift up man to the Divine nature, rather than draw down the Divine until it is lost in the conception of its transformation to a material substance. This conversion of matter into spirit, and not spirit into matter, is the true object and mission of the ministry, whereby the world is turned into the Church, and not the Church into the world, as has been the result of the other process, and cannot but be the result of any process which substitutes the seen for the unseen, and relegates the spirit, and that knowledge which is its nourishment, into a place where it needs not and cannot be supplied, and must in the end wither away.

The revelation of God as a Father, manifested by the Son and apprehended by the Spirit, is that which the soul needs, and is the object of Revelation. If this is known and received by us, we find that our souls live and are renewed. We are conscious of it. There is no one who 'finds the Father' but must know that he does so. The fact of God's being so made known to him is manifested by the effect of that knowledge upon himself. It is a new life to him, of which he cannot be unconscious. Any one who 'finds the Father' is no less sure that what he has found is true than that he had hitherto not found Him. And he who finds the Father will not fall into materialistic conceptions; while, until he has found Him, such or kindred conceptions are inevitable. Their presence is as much a proof of his not having 'found the Father,' as it is certain that such finding will force him from them. The first thing, therefore, is to make the Father known, so that He may be found, and not to busy ourselves, as teachers, with controversies as to false results. We should set forth that which is truest and highest, and everything will then fall into its proper place. This will prevent materialistic error, or, where it already obtains, will supersede it. The opening of the door of heaven, and the manifestation of the Father, will relegate all false notions of God and of His ways into their own place. And if this be our main office as teachers, be it ours to fulfil it until all lower and false conceptions shall lose their hold and vanish away as darkness before the sun, and the transitory and fitful life of time be changed into the calm and unvarying life of eternity. For such must be the result of the true knowledge of God as He has revealed Himself to us in 'the face of Jesus Christ:' according to

the saying of Christ Himself, 'This is life eternal, to know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent,' and the saying of the Apostle, 'He that hath the Son hath life, and he that hath not the Son hath not life."

A few pages are here added from an explanation of some passages in the Charge, which its author printed shortly after its publication, and which are needful for the right understanding of the correspondence which is appended. One remark the editor must make in explanation, viz., that in regard to the *place* of Scripture, he quite recognises the position of the Bishop of St. David's and Dr. Campbell, that it was not intended to be that "Comforter" of whom Christ spoke as being about to send; neither is it altogether the mode in which He promised to be with His Church to the end of time:—

> "Verbum Dei non est alligatum."
> "Ubi Spiritus Dei, ibi libertas."

"That the knowledge of God as revealed in Christ is needful for individual salvation can scarce be doubted; but a knowledge of that which we have in Christ, and what that was which He came to give, is also the only true means for the union, as in itself it is the true basis of the Church of Christ. Salvation, supposed to be the product of material substances, acting apart from knowledge, can only produce a material body; and this in no true sense can be called the kingdom of God, or be any true representation of the Church of Christ.

"The re-union of Christendom, now so much desired,

cannot be produced by mechanical means. 'The Apostolic Succession' (so called) acting *ex opere* will not effect it. The means must be spiritual, and the agent must be knowledge. Such knowledge, if it be the true, will produce its own true effect; but it would be well not to define its limits over closely. If a definition be requisite for what is called terms of communion for a Church, or outward bond of union, these cannot be too few, if they contain the true basis. Perhaps the summary given by our Lord to his Apostles when He sent them forth to preach and to baptize might be the best. For when we go beyond this, we are apt to lay down distinctions which go further to divide than to unite Christians. The baptismal formula, as it was enough in the beginning, ought to be so now, that is, as a formal basis; and although the preachers of the Gospel will go beyond its terms, and must do so to teach, they will err if they go beyond the virtual meaning and the true spirit of that formula, viz., to know the Father by the Son, and in the Holy Ghost.

"If we believe that God is our Father, and that He is educating us to be sons, 'judging us, that He may teach,—not teaching us, that He may judge,'—revealing Himself to us by his Son in the Spirit, this will secure individual salvation, if rightly received, and produce a true union, by producing the one and only true kingdom or ground for union. Apart from this nothing will be sufficient; and it is evident that here it is the Spirit which is both the cementing-link and the basis of union, and that nothing else is. Materialistic means not only never can produce union of spirit (at the best they produce only a mechanical, not a chemical union), but they also, in themselves, too often

become a means of disunion. The Sacraments themselves have become the great causes of separation, as the mass of Rome and the communion of Protestants, and not means of union.

"False foundations must produce false results; materialistic views of the kingdom of God hinder the entrance of the true kingdom; and substitutions of a wrong for the right kingdom are, no doubt, one of the main reasons why the world has been so long but 'Satan's kingdom displayed.' They have helped the setting up, not of Christ's, but of the world's kingdom, or certainly have not prevented it. Why has the earth so long run, and still runs, with blood? Why are nations still in arms, but because the Church's mission has failed? She has not set up the true kingdom, the one kingdom, the kingdom of the Father and the Son, in the true spirit—that there is but one Father, and that all men are sons and brethren. So many churches, so many kingdoms; so many kingdoms, so many churches; instead of the one Church and one Kingdom. We make definitions, instead of destroying them: we divide hearts whom the Lord hath not divided; and His kingdom is, in consequence, in ruins. It is not indeed *easy* to set it up. Its first Founder and His Apostles laid down their lives in the task, and were its foundations. But what has been built thereon? One kingdom, one Lord, one baptism? Many Lords and many baptisms and many kingdoms. The knowledge of the true kingdom is all but lost, and instead of knowledge we are going to use materialistic apparatus! That will not much help us. It has been tried long, and found wanting. It is not much knowledge which is wanted: it is but knowledge of the true thing. Definitions, articles, con-

fessions, have rather helped than hindered. It has been well said, 'Our fathers smoothed our path, but made it hard, and with protection have endangered life, and laying bare, have sealed; their sons inherit still their fathers' debts, as well as their old field.' We must rather diminish than increase definition, while we admit all knowledge of the right sort. Such will increase, and not diminish union, which definitions do; and the right sort of knowledge is 'all that tends to bring man to one spirit, to the spirit of a common home in the house of one common Father, through Christ.' Mechanical means can do nothing towards this; mechanical is not chemical, material is not spiritual union, and anything less is of no use to the spirit, and is no part of the kingdom of the Redeemer. This is that error which has so long paralyzed the Church, and nullified Christianity: it is no part of the kingdom of the Father, but a substitute for, and hindrance to it. Yet, terrified by the confusions of the time, and even by the brightness of the coming light, there are those who think that their only safety is in having recourse to darkness, while safety can alone be had by the entrance of light; and light no one can hold materialism to be. Salvation of the spirit must be the product of light. It cannot be by material substances.

"Yet, in saying that it comes by knowledge, we would not be understood to say that a *mere intellectual* apprehension of the truth is sufficient for salvation. We do not say or think so. Such knowledge as we mean is not mere intellectual knowledge: knowledge of the Father by Christ is more moral than intellectual; yet it must be spoken of as knowledge, and it is this we mean when we say that know-

ledge is the way, and that there is no other. 'It is life eternal to know Thee the only true God'—to know is the way; such knowledge is not intellectual merely, but rather apprehension by the whole moral and intellectual nature of man—apprehension and conformity—'fellowship' with the Father through the revelation and putting forth of the Son, 'by knowledge of whom standeth our eternal life,' as also by knowledge of the truth is life everlasting. But in truth two views are now contending for mastery. Salvation by knowledge and salvation by ignorance: salvation by knowing what we worship, and by worshipping we know not what. It is strange that such a choice should have to be made at this date of Revelation; but no doubt it has; and on our choice, our own and our Church's and our country's future greatly depend. If we choose with the materialistic portion, our lot will be with the past Churches and States of the Continent; if with the spiritual, with the future of the Church and the world. We believe that the former have perished and are perishing by inverting the true conditions of life, that the latter will live and do live by attending to them. There is a sort of peace with the one, but it is that of death; there is struggle with the other, but it is the sign of life. An infallible voice and a materialistic organization may give a tranquillity and semi-movement, but it is that of an automaton and spasm; the other, if it gives toil and power to err, is also the only way to life in any true sense, and the knowledge we have is Holy Scripture interpreted by the Holy Spirit to the individual. If Holy Scripture thus used is not that Comforter who was to come, still it is a guide sufficient into all truth. And no other outward guide sufficient has come that we are aware

of. All say in the Christian Churches that with the outward an inward guide is also needed. But, is it not more likely He should be with us in the search for the meaning of that He has unquestionably given in the Holy Scriptures? It has been the spirit of the New Testament which has guided the Church to all that is best in her history; and wherever this has failed her, she has failed. By the spirit of the New Testament we can try all other spirits, and by this cast out all other spirits which are manifestly not hers. The spirit of the New Testament gives us the spirit of the true kingdom, and that which is not of the spirit of that kingdom cannot be of the kingdom. That kingdom is to place us in the bosom of the Father as His sons, and into the Jerusalem which is above. It is the spirit of the New Testament, and it takes us back to whence it came. It is a personal spirit, even as our spirits are personal. It is the Holy Ghost, that Guide and Comforter, who was to be with His disciples when Christ left them, so that they should not walk in darkness; and he who has this spirit does not walk in darkness. All who are led by it are in the light and one—one body, made one by the one spirit; not a spirit made one by one body, which is impossible. The kingdom of God is a spiritual kingdom. Its union comes by its being filled with one spirit. Its head is spiritual, its members spiritual. This spirit or kingdom filleth all things; it is in all, and through all, and over all; it is not a Jewish kingdom with a Jewish Messiah, but the kingdom of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."

CORRESPONDENCE.

I.

The present Archbishop of Canterbury, in reference to the foregoing charge, in writing to the author, in March, 1867, says as follows :—

"I could not but expect that the whole tone and tenor of the charge would be distasteful to those who hold the very errors against which it is designed solemnly to protest. But there are some words and phrases which may fail to communicate your meaning and may convey an erroneous impression as to what are the grave errors which you design to resist. I am sure that in your expression, 'being saved by knowledge,' and some similar phrases, you do not cast any doubt on the doctrine of our being justified by faith. No such bare knowledge of the contents of Revelation, such as the devils have when 'they believe and tremble,' can be meant by you to be other than useless. The knowledge which justifies is an intelligent faith, and the knowledge of which you speak is inseparable from such faith; that knowledge of God in Jesus Christ, which brings the faithful near to the Father, through their Redeemer. What you protest against is the vain thought that man may be brought near to God by the mere force of material substances acting as charms, without believing in Him and knowing Him. The Lord's Supper brings blessings on the soul through the intelligent faith of him who receives it, but not otherwise.

"You do not mean that man can attain salvation by his own efforts without the Spirit of God; where you speak of

'working out our own salvation,' I presume it is with the Apostolic conclusion 'it is God that worketh in us both to will and to do of His own God pleasure.'*

"That many will dislike your view of the 'Apostolical Succession' I cannot doubt; but it is the view, I believe, of the overwhelming majority of members of the Church of England, of a long series of our best divines, of the thirty-third of the Thirty-nine Articles, and of the Preface of the Ordination Service, both of which formularies you have quoted, and you do well to protest against that exclusive and uncharitable, as well as materialistic, view of Apostolical Succession which limits the efficiency of God's grace to a comparatively small section of Christians, and denies that that grace can work in churches non-episcopal."

II.

FROM THE BISHOP OF ST. DAVID'S TO THE BISHOP OF ARGYLL.

Abergwili Palace, Carmarthen, 15th July, 1867.

MY DEAR BISHOP,—

I feel sure that on the subject of the knowledge of God, in its bearing on salvation, we are at bottom quite agreed. But I cannot help wishing that you had expressed yourself a little differently. To say that "salvation consists in the knowledge of God" is evidently an unsatisfactory way of speaking, as it requires an explanation; but it is not more obscure than the phrase "to be in the Spirit of

* It is scarce needful to say that the Archbishop is correct in his view of the author's meaning.

God." Your statement that "salvation" is the *product* o knowledge," or that knowledge is the *means* of salvation, does not seem to me to be at all supported by the words of our Lord cited by you. Those words do not seem to me to say anything about the *means* of salvation, but about salvation itself, or "life eternal," which is described as a "knowing." But it is no more possible that this "knowing" should be a merely intellectual process than that the "life eternal" should be a mere endless being. For if so, both would be something common to angels and devils. It must be something more than knowledge, viz., a loving, adoring knowledge, of which good spirits only are capable, not one which creates fear and torment. Unfortunately our word *to know* does not suggest this idea, as do both the Hebrew *yada* and the Greek γιγνώσκω (which makes the γνωτοί τε γνωταί τε of Homer equivalent to "nearest" and "dearest"). It is in this sense that God says of Israel (Amos iii. 2), "You only have I *known* of all the families of the earth," not meaning to limit His omniscience, but to express His tender care; and in a like sense (Nahum i. 7), "The Lord *knoweth* them that trust in Him." This knowledge is the ἐπιγνῶσις of St. Paul (Ephes. iii. 3, cf. 1 Cor. xiii. 12), not, I apprehend, a *means* or a stage, but the consummation, the beatific vision itself. I would therefore rather say that salvation, or eternal life, consists in the love of God; because this implies some degree of knowledge, whereas knowledge does not imply any degree of love (1 Cor. xiii. 2).

I do not think you are warranted in so contrasting the "holding justification by faith alone" with the tenet "that we are saved by instrumentality, acting apart from the

intelligence." I should myself be equally loath to adopt either tenet in its naked literality, because both are equally Antinomian. Properly explained, the first may be a very sound and wholesome doctrine. But is it certain that either any Church or any School would admit your statement of the second to be a fair description of its views? If the sacraments are means of grace, it cannot be denied that they are, in their measure and degree, means of salvation, and this would be perfectly consistent with the doctrine of justification by faith, rightly understood. The measure and degree may be exaggerated by one party, unduly lowered by another; but this is not sufficient to establish a contrast between the things themselves.

Another point on which I am quite unable to agree with you, is your view of Scripture as realizing the promise of the Holy Spirit. That in this promise our Lord had writings of any kind in His view appears to me utterly incredible in itself, as well as destitute of all evidence, if not absolutely inconsistent with the language of St. Paul (1 Cor. xii. 4 ff. and Eph. iv. 4 ff). The peculiar value of the New Testament as the only trustworthy record of the original revelation, does not appear to me either to need or to be enhanced by such a hypothesis. Indeed, I hardly understand how you reconcile it with the gift of the Spirit at a time when not a line of the New Testament was yet written.

I am,

My dear Bishop,

Yours faithfully,

C. St. David's.

III.

MR. ERSKINE TO THE BISHOP OF ARGYLL.

On reading the above letter Mr. Erskine wrote to the Bishop of Argyll as follows:—

"In order to feel gratitude, I require to apprehend a loving purpose in relation to myself; and in order to feel confidence, I require to apprehend a trustworthiness in relation to myself. Even so I cannot love God without apprehending a love-worthiness, a love-attractiveness in Him; and if salvation consists in the love of God, I can have salvation only through this apprehension. And if the Sacraments are means of salvation, it must be by ministering to this apprehension. The meaning of justification by faith is, that man is put into his right state by *trust* in God. It is revealed in Jesus Christ because Jesus was the great truster, the author and finisher of our faith; His faith was *filial trust*, being the trust of the Son, and our relation to Him as our Head—we being as a race created in Him—is the assurance to us that His Father is our Father; and is thus also the call on us, and the warrant to us, to trust God with filial trust. Justification by faith means simply that man is not in his right state unless he knows God as his Father, and trusts Him with *filial trust*. The faith of Christ, in its deepest sense, is not faith or belief concerning Christ, but Christ's own faith or filial trust in the Father, in which we are called to participate. This trust we cannot have unless we know that God is indeed

our Father; and therefore to make this revelation was the great object of our Lord's appearing upon earth. The real question treated by St. Paul in the Epistle to the Romans is, What is righteousness, and how is it to be attained? And the answer is, That it consists in filial trust in God, which is to be attained by our discovery that He is really our Father.

"Faith is the recipient organ in the spiritual being. And as all good is in God, as its Fountain, the creature can only be good by faith, because it can only be good by receiving out of Him. Faith is thus the true nexus of the spiritual cosmos.

"Christ's life and death were just manifestations of this faith—'not my will, but Thine, be done.' 'The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?' He, assuming our nature and its conditions, fulfilled all duties in perfect filial trust, and He invites us to enter into His trust by assuring us that His Father is our Father also. He says, 'My yoke is easy, and my burden light' (not the yoke and burden which He imposes on us, but which He Himself bears); because I know the Father, who lays them on me, and His loving purpose in doing it. 'No man knoweth the Father save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him;' I know the Father, and that knowledge makes my yoke easy; and I reveal the Father to you, that you may find your yoke easy also.

"In this revelation of the Father lies our redemption, because by it we are invited and warranted and enabled to partake in Christ's trust — that trust which always pours out the life, and which always puts away sin by the sacrifice of self. Christ did all that he did *ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν*, not *ἀνθ' ἡμῶν*, for us, that we might do it also;

not instead of us, or to save us from doing it. He is our Head, and his appearance on earth was an epitome of the right life of man; it belongs to us as the head and the actions of the head belong to the members of the body. But as He is our *spiritual* head, we can only really participate with Him and make His actions our own by faith, by *spiritual recipiency*. There is nothing conventional or arbitrary in this necessity for faith.

"A man may love me as much as he pleases, but unless believe it,* his love can never enter into me.

"T. ERSKINE."

IV.

FROM THE BISHOP OF ST. DAVID'S TO THE BISHOP OF ARGYLL.

Abergwili Palace, Carmarthen, 29th July, 1867.

MY DEAR BISHOP,—

I am much obliged to you for the sight of the inclosed paper. I am not sure in what way it was meant to bear on my remarks in my letter to you. But it contains some propositions which, if I understand them, I could not adopt. I have not now leisure to discuss them, but will very briefly notice one or two. It is very true, as a matter of fact, that gratitude enters very largely as an ingredient in our love toward God, as it does in that of children to their parents. But this I consider as a mark of imperfection, of

* And I must know it to believe it.—A. E., Bp.

moral and intellectual childishness and selfishness. Mr. Erskine seems, on the contrary, to treat it as not merely the natural, but the normal state of things; to identify love with gratitude, and to make the benefits which we either have received or expect from God the measure of his "love-worthiness," as if his rightful claim to our love depended upon them, which would appear to degrade Him into a property or an instrument, to be valued in proportion to its usefulness. I am loath to attribute such an opinion to any one; but if the meaning is not this, I think it should have been differently expressed; and after a repeated perusal, I can find no other which seems to me in accordance with the general drift of the Paper.

The interpretation of our Lord's words in Matt. xi. 28—30 seems to me quite inadmissible, even in the application proposed by Olshausen to the Cross, much more in the sense that our Lord spoke of his own filial obedience as a yoke and a burden. He was speaking to those who were "heavy laden," and inviting them into a state in which, if they would "learn of Him," and in proportion as they did so, they would "find rest to their souls." It is, as I apprehend, not the exchange of one yoke or burden for another that is meant, but a training which leads to perfect rest and liberty—that which Christ himself already enjoyed.

You seem to have added at the end some words of your own, for the purpose of connecting the concluding proposition with your own statements as to the necessity of knowledge. And undoubtedly in every act of faith, in every religious act, there must always be two elements—a thought and a feeling. Without the one, it would not be properly an *act;* without the other, it would not be *religious.* It

seemed to me that, while insisting on one of these factors, you had neglected the other.

I am,

My dear Bishop,

Yours faithfully,

C. St. David's.

V.

From the Rev. Dr. J. M'Leod Campbell to the Bishop of Argyll.

Laurel Bank, 29th July, 1867.

My dear Bishop,—

It has just occurred to me, in re-reading your letter, that I ought to have returned its enclosure immediately. I kept it by me until I could be able to comply in some measure with your wish that I should say something as to its contents.

To begin with what comes last—Dr. Thirlwall's refusal to recognise the promise of the Spirit as fulfilled in the New Testament Scriptures. I entirely concur in the reasons of this refusal. But while I agree in what I understand to be a refusal to limit our participation in the teaching of the promised Comforter to the immediate elucidation of the Scriptures, so reading the promise, "He shall take of mine and show it unto you," as if it were, "He shall take of the Scriptures and elucidate them to you," I would still feel it difficult to express my own positive faith in this matter.

Inasmuch as the New Testament is the record of that which the first teachers of Christianity knew and taught, its value to us is, that in some measure it makes us to share in

the light of the early Church. That that light is not seen to have brightened as time progressed; that, on the contrary, we are constrained to mark a great falling off in the writings of the fathers; and that whatever light justly entitled to be received as a development of truth has been given since their time, has presented less the character of inspiration and more that of reasoning from premisses furnished by the record of previous inspiration, is a fact as to which we may not know its true relation to the promise of the Spirit as one to the Church throughout all ages.

What of comfort as well as of rebuke, and of rebuke as well as of comfort, was intended by the words, "as when I brought you out of Egypt, my Spirit remaineth among you still," we may not be able to measure. I know that these words were at one time used with application to the Church in our own day, as justifying prayer for the restoration of the gifts which were in the Church at the beginning; and how far the ceasing of these gifts has been in judgment or only a new aspect of God's educating of his Church, is a subject on which I have no clear light. Sometimes it appears to me as if a deeper personal teaching, a more spiritual knowledge of that kingdom of God which is not meat or drink, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost, should be, and is intended to be, the result of the ceasing of those outward and palpable tokens of that kingdom—tongues, and prophesyings, and gifts of healing; but I do not know. The unity of truth, the unchanging nature of the first principles of Christ, the varied illustration of these in what we have preserved to us of the teaching of the Apostles, explain how the Church's growth in grace and the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ

might be expected to advance without a continued stream of revelation. Nevertheless I cannot subordinate the work of the Spirit to the gift of the New Testament; and I believe that we shall be less and less in danger of doing so as we realize more and more the will of our God to be, that in his light we should see light.

I can understand the temptation to the Reformers, protesting against the claim of the Church to be infallible, and with a habit of holding truth simply on authority, to fall back on the Scriptures as they did; but these three hundred years have taught us how little unity or harmony a free appeal to the written word could secure; and so *we* are thrown back on the promise, "And they shall be all taught of God."

However, this is not the subject with which at present you have most to do.

As to the words *know*, *knowledge*, although our English words may not have in themselves the same range of meaning which the Bishop notices as belonging to the words which they are used to translate, yet it seems to me that their use by our translators has resulted in imparting to them much at least of the wider meaning of the Greek words (and I suppose I may add Hebrew). The impression which the very passages which the Bishop quotes naturally make on English readers seems to me to imply this.

Knowledge *seems* to refer simply to a condition of intellect; but the possibility of such a condition of the intellect in reference to special subjects, depends on something else than intellect itself. In reference to the high matters with which you are dealing, we believe that capacity of intelligence is increased by goodness and is contracted by evil. The

intelligence with which the words may be used, "God is love," depends not on the measure of intellect in the speaker, but on the measure in which he dwells in love. When it is said that "this is eternal life, that they should know Thee the only true God and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent," a knowledge is spoken of which is impossible apart from the Spirit of God—may I not say impossible "to devils," whatever the measure of their intellectual power may be. I quite agree with the Bishop that these words of our Lord do not state what the means of life are, but what the life itself is. Nevertheless, it seems to be sound spiritual logic to argue back from the life that has to be quickened and nourished in speaking of the nature of its proper food. I mean that we are justified in saying, that if the life be knowledge, that which feeds it is knowledge.

I am reminded, in reading Dr. Thirlwall's letter, of a question with which I have known thoughtful minds a good deal perplexed. We are saved by faith, faith which worketh by love; so faith seems to come first, as receiving love and working by love, love being the power by which it purifies the heart and overcomes the world. But does not faith, the possibility of believing in love, imply something in the spirit cognate to that which it believes? "Charity believeth all things."

Such questions invite to an analysis probably beyond our powers. Our consciousness records only love revealed, believed, responded to; and, in being responded to, becoming the life of the Spirit responding.

As to justification by faith, the contrast is between "that we are saved by instrumentality acting apart from the intelligence," and *the life of faith*—not with *justification by faith*.

What you object to, as appearing to you materialistic, is either the supposed quickening of the Divine life in Baptism, or the supposed nourishing of that life through partaking in the Eucharist.

As to the Sacraments "as means of grace, and therefore means of salvation in their measure and degree," I could accept this language as what I could use to express my own convictions, but I do not know whether as understanding the words as used by the Bishop. If what he objects to in your statement, which he doubts whether any School would accept, be the expression "apart from the intelligence," I may infer that the presence of intelligence is what he would look to to save the use of the Sacraments from Antinomianism.

But as to justification by faith considered in itself, and what it is that saves that doctrine from being Antinomian, I think you know that my conviction on this subject is, that the *holiness of justifying faith is secured by the nature of the object of the faith that justifies.* Faith being a reality brings the spirit under the power of that which is believed; and that which is believed being the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, being renewed after that image is the necessary result of believing.

It has only been when not in the present sense of redeeming love, that it has ever been possible to feel a need of such guards and protections from Antinomianism in setting forth justification by faith, as have been had recourse to both before the Reformation, and since also, though in new forms.

I have the Bishop of Salisbury's Charge, which you sent me.

With kind regards from myself (and my amanuensis),

Yours ever, very truly,

JOHN M'L. CAMPBELL.

VI.

FROM MR. ERSKINE TO THE BISHOP OF ARGYLL.

Linlathen, Dundee, 14th August, 1867.

VESCOVO CARISSIMO,—

What I said of gratitude was simply to illustrate the necessity of having something to awaken an emotion before the emotion can be awakened. I might have taken fear for my illustration as well as gratitude. At the same time, I conceive that gratitude must remain a permanent element in our normal spiritual condition, which must be imperfect without it. As creatures we are essentially dependent recipients, and must for ever be so, and gratitude is just the true recognition of this law of our being.

I dare say you remember the confession of sin at the beginning of the Genevese Liturgy: "Nous confessons que nous sommes des pauvres pécheurs, nés dans la corruption, inclinés au mal, incapables par nous-mêmes de faire du bien." Evidently the composers of this prayer had the idea that this "incapacité de faire du bien, par nous-mêmes," was an imperfection; but in fact it is not so—it belongs necessarily to our condition as creatures. It might as well be considered an imperfection in a branch that it cannot produce fruit of itself, but requires the sap of the vine. The perfection of a son implies dependence. We are created in the Son that we may partake in his relation to the Father. This purpose of God towards us is the starting-point of our spiritual existence, and gives its character to our existence at every successive moment of its duration, calling forth our gratitude whilst that existence lasts, and making gratitude a necessary element of our perfection.

The perfections of God are not set before us that we should appreciate them as independent beings. We ourselves proceed from Him, and everything which we possess proceeds from Him, and must do so for ever—and gratitude is merely the moral name for dependent recipiency. I am sure that the Bishop of St. David's sees this as clearly as I do.

My disinterested approbation and admiration of God's perfections are not lessened or polluted by my sense that these perfections must be the fountain from which all my own being and well-being and blessedness necessarily proceed.

I am also sure that the Bishop must agree with what I said of the passage which concludes the eleventh chapter of St. Matthew. The key to its meaning is in the twenty-seventh verse—"Neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him." The Son, in taking our flesh, came under a yoke which was in itself most uneasy, and a burden in itself most heavy; but His knowledge of the gracious purpose of the Father in imposing them on Him, made them easy and light to Him. And the help which He proffers to the weary and heavy laden is just the discovery to them that His Father is theirs also, and that His purpose in laying them under this yoke and burden is to train them into a participation of His own righteousness and blessedness. When our Lord says, "For I am meek and lowly of heart," He means merely to say, "I am a dependent recipient; this is the right state of the moral creation, and I, as the Head of that creation [ἀρχὴ τῆς κτίσεως τοῦ Θεοῦ] live in this right state, and I find rest to my soul in it."

I suppose that your idea of the corruption of the Sacraments is connected with the principle which our Lord urged on the Jews when He said to them, "Not that which goeth into the mouth defileth a man;" for according to that same principle, "not that which goeth into the mouth can sanctify a man."*

If you think it at all worth while to show these pages to the Bishop of St. David's, I hope his lordship will understand that I am not for a moment thinking of bandying logic with him, but that I wish to explain the meaning which I meant to express in what I wrote before, and which I see has been mistaken by him. I never had any thought that our Lord's filial obedience could be a burden to Him. On the contrary, it was His filial feeling to His Father which made the yoke and burden of His earthly walk easy and light to Him. "The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?" However bitter in itself it may be, will not His loving purpose in it sweeten it?

I believe that the Apostolical benediction with which Paul concludes most of his Epistles, ought to be interpreted on this principle; that is, I believe that "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ" is not the grace which He bestows, but the grace in which He himself stands, and which consists in the love of God and the fellowship of the Spirit.

He is our Head, and we have our standing in Him in consequence of our being created in Him. I don't make this relation by my faith, or baptism, or anything else. I

* As holiness is a spiritual thing, whatever goes to its nourishment in man's soul must be received by a spiritual organ. I love God by apprehending His love-worthiness, which I can only do through spiritual apprehension or understanding.

am created in it, but I can receive no spiritual benefit from it except through my recipient organ, *i.e.*, *my faith.*

Ever yours, faithfully and affectionately,

T. ERSKINE.

VII.

FROM THE BISHOP OF ST. DAVID'S TO THE BISHOP OF ARGYLL.

4th September, 1867.

MY DEAR BISHOP,—

Even without the privilege of a personal acquaintance with Mr. Erskine, I feel in reading his remarks that I cannot differ from him on such a subject without distrusting my own judgment, and must hope that there may be only the seeming of a difference arising from a misunderstanding. I think I observed in my last letter that I did not clearly see the bearing of Mr. Erskine's first paper on the subject of my criticism of your charge, and I am now under the disadvantage of writing without the means of referring either to my own remarks or to his. It may be owing to this that I do not see why he lays so much stress on "the necessity of having something to awaken an emotion." Am I supposed to have denied that? What I might have said, though I am not aware that I did so, is that there may be emotion (certainly not without a cause, but) either absolutely without, or with a minimum of consciousness. Such, I would say, is the state of the infant on its mother's breast.

Again, I had certainly not suspected that *fear* would have served Mr. Erskine's purpose of illustration as well as *gratitude.* No doubt, if you fear, it must be somebody or something; and if you are grateful, it must be to somebody

for something. But have I directly or indirectly denied that? Otherwise, the difference between *fear*, the most purely selfish, painful, and loveless of instincts, and *gratitude*, is so great that the little they have in common would seem immaterial.

But when Mr. Erskine adds: "I conceive that gratitude must remain a permanent element in our normal spiritual condition," we come to a point at which our views certainly diverge. All that I can do is to endeavour briefly to explain my own. The love of the infant for its mother is at first purely instinctive. That of the child may be continually strengthened by the experience of kindness, before the awakening of reflection, still more before the actual forming of any judgment on the character of its object. But it may happen, and I suppose often happens, that as the intelligence expands and knowledge is enlarged, the child makes the painful discovery that the person whom it most tenderly loves is not loveworthy. The gratitude which it does not cease to feel is not accompanied by approbation or respect. It remains only as a selfish irrational instinct.

With regard to God the case is exactly the reverse. The more we discover of His nature, the more we must find Him worthy of our love; and the perception of His loveworthiness must tend to swallow up our sense of benefits received from Him. The contemplation of this glorious object must, in its supreme degree, absorb all reflection on self, and just on this account it is *ecstasy*, rapture, the perfection of bliss. It is a state of admiring love. And I do not see how the sense of gratitude, which implies reflexion on self, would add anything to its felicity. It would, I think, be a descent to a lower stage of spiritual life. And

yet such a state of ecstasy does not imply any illusion. The relation of the creature to the Creator of course must always remain the same, and may be implicitly acknowledged, though it is not distinctly present to the mind. So far as there is consciousness, there must be a consciousness of dependence. But I conceive that the supreme happiness is so far from depending on the distinctness of that consciousness, that ultimately, as mathematicians would say, at the *limit*, it excludes such distinctness.

This may seem to be at direct variance with the proposition that our normal (if by that is meant our highest) spiritual condition must be imperfect without gratitude. But it may be that the nature of a creature is incapable of such contemplation beyond certain limits of time, and that its highest permanent condition is one which fluctuates between ecstasy and reflexion. Only I would still say that ecstasy is the crest of the wave.

Also I am aware that this is a mystical speculation, relating solely to a heavenly state, and that, as long as we continue upon earth, the sense of creaturely dependence will be indispensable for our safety, and, relatively to our earthly condition, an essential element in our happiness. I cannot assent to Mr. Erskine's interpretations of Scripture in the passages he cites, but I am persuaded that his doctrine does not at all depend on their correctness. On looking again at the paper, I cannot help thinking that there has been some confusion in Mr. Erskine's mind between the objective and the subjective, which is betrayed by his illustration of the Branch. The creaturely relation is necessary and eternal; but the consciousness of it may be suspended, or even cease altogether. I wish I had a

better prospect of soon paying a visit to Scotland, but am always, my dear Bishop,

Yours faithfully,

C. St. David's.

VIII.

From Mr. Erskine to the Bishop of Argyll.

Linlathen, 23d September, 1867.

Dear Friend,—

I feel myself much honoured by the Bishop of St. David's thinking it worth his while to meet any of my thoughts; and I believe that I shall best show my sense of his kindness by endeavouring to make them more intelligible. Of course I never dreamt of instructing him; and, in what I wrote, was thinking simply of what I conceive to be errors by which our theology is at present threatened. That is the explanation of the stress I laid on the importance "of having something to awaken an emotion." Let me illustrate my idea by a physical example. A planet would find a chart of its course a poor substitute for the law of gravitation. It could not keep its course by trying to keep it. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and thy neighbour as thyself," is the chart of our course, expressing the emotions which ought continually to fill us, and which, if they really did always fill us, would produce perfect righteousness. But we need a law of gravitation to keep us in this course just as much as the planet does; *no mere effort* on our part can supply what is needed. We cannot love by trying to love, we cannot trust by trying to trust. A discerned loveworthiness, a discerned trust-

worthiness in God, is the "something which we need to awaken these emotions, and to keep them in healthy exercise," and is that which brings us under our proper law of spiritual gravitation.

The stress which I laid on this is, I believe, what *you* meant by the importance of *knowledge* in your "Charge."

St. Paul speaks of the Gospel of Christ as the δύναμις Θεοῦ εἰς σωτηρίαν, *i.e.*, as containing the divine dynamics, by which man may be lifted out of sin into righteousness, because in it there is a revelation made of the character of God and of his relation to us fitted to produce this result.

When we spiritually (not merely intellectually) apprehend this revelation, we come under our true law of gravitation. The doctrines of Christianity are simply that exposition of the character of God, and of our relation to Him, which is needed to guide us in our spiritual course and to enable us to move in it. This is the *one* use of believing them. If we do not see in them such an exhibition of the character of God and of our relation to Him as may so guide and quicken us, we may as well repudiate them. We are not to believe them as if there were any mysterious virtue contained in the belief of them, or as if there were any duty in believing them, but simply because they give us the knowledge of our true circumstances, and so help us to walk in them.

I am afraid that I may appear to be making much ado about a very plain matter—about a matter which, at least, all intelligent thinkers take for granted; but I am sure that in the ordinary theology of this country it is not admitted. Orthodox belief is almost universally considered as a duty of itself, altogether independent of its effects in producing a right spiritual relation to God, and a right conformity of

our wills to his. It is not thought of as containing the *dynamics* of righteousness. The Athanasian Creed may, perhaps, be a strong case—even an extreme case; but yet I would say that the principle of believing, for *believing's sake*, is generally accepted. Σωτηρία is very generally understood as "pardon," and as conditional on orthodoxy, instead of as a spiritual state produced naturally and necessarily by a spiritual apprehension of truth. Nothing but this spiritual apprehension of our true circumstances can produce this σωτηρία—no rites or ceremonies whatever; and any good which these can possibly do, must be by helping us to this spiritual apprehension.

What I said about gratitude being "a permanent element in our normal spiritual condition," is connected with these ideas. By gratitude, I mean *thankful recipiency in general*, as well as thankfulness for *special* benefits as *creatures* of God, continually upheld by the same love which brought us into being. I do not think that we can be in our true moral condition at any period of our existence without the conscious sense of this being our position. The contemplation of God's perfections by a limited but independent being might have its highest result in producing *ecstasy;* but when I contemplate God, I cannot forget that He is the fountain out of which my existence, and everything which makes it desirable, proceed; so that I am necessitated to regard Him *thus related to me.* I cannot conceive of Him *absolutely.* But more than this: it appears to me that Jesus himself cannot think of God otherwise than as His *Father;* that is, He must think of Him relatively; and He is our example for eternity. Gratitude in the case of man's relation to God, need not be a selfish degrading feeling,

but may be only a personal bond—a bond connecting us personally and individually with the unlimited goodness of God, and making it more real to us, freeing it as it does from all vagueness. Nevertheless, I admire exceedingly the train of thought on this subject. When his lordship expresses his dissent from my interpretations of Scripture, I think that he refers to my remarks on the concluding verses of the eleventh chapter of St. Matthew; yet I cannot but believe that he will come to agree with me, if he will only take the last clause of the twenty-seventh verse as the text and key of what follows. My anxiety on this point does not regard merely the meaning of that particular passage, for I think that the principle of interpretation which I advocate there throws great light on the sixteenth and seventeenth verses of the first chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, and, through them, on the whole Epistle. But I am sure that I have wearied out the patience both of yourself and your right reverend correspondent, who, I hope, will forgive the liberty which an unlearned layman has taken with him.

Yours affectionately,

T. ERSKINE.

THE following letters of Dr. J. MacLeod Campbell to the Bishop of Argyll have no direct reference to the subject of the preceding Charge, but as bearing on the same question —the relation of Knowledge to Salvation—it has been thought desirable, with the author's sanction, to append them here. It is needless to say that they are of great intrinsic value, and as throwing light upon the questions

which have lately agitated, and must ever more or less affect the Church, namely, the place of authority in relation to light, and particularly as we have seen it culminate in the Church of Rome in the dogma of Papal Infallibility, they cannot fail to be of use to such as have had their thoughts exercised on the subject. And they will not have the less value in that the opinions in them were expressed before the issue of the Papal Syllabus or the annunciation of the Dogma of Papal Infallibility.

I.

THE PLACES OF AUTHORITY AND OF LIGHT.

Partick, Glasgow, 29th September, 1865.

MY DEAR BISHOP,—

I was made acquainted with this book of Dr. Manning's some time ago, by a friend who valued it as accepting fully its conclusions. I have not seen anything there may have been offered to the Church as an answer, nor do I know of any formal reply. I feel with you that most Protestants would take what we should regard as too low ground; and I should be very thankful for an argument on the claim made for Rome, which was conducted in the light of the high purpose of Revelation, as a help to personal knowledge of God, and not in itself, or in conjunction with the Church, a *substitute* for such knowledge.

Dr. Newman says, knowledge of God implies an infallible record and an infallible interpreter. To hold these *essential*, is to ignore all other witness; to hold these *sufficient*, assuming that we possess them, is to come short of the true

apprehension of God's purpose of Self-revelation, and the attaining of which implies a seeing light in light, as the condition to which man is brought.

I am satisfied that the tendency of things is to force thoughtful minds to take "true measure" of what they really know of their "eternal treasure." Many of those who shrink from falling back on the inherent authority of light are themselves (though they may not consider it so) illustrations of the soundness of that principle. I refer to persons who have become the subjects of a true and deep religious awakening; for the confidence with which they speak of the realities in which they rejoice is altogether referable to a seeing light *as light*. So far as mere authority goes, there has been no change. What they believe, they never doubted; but they now *know* it to be true, as they never did before. I would wish to induce such persons to say distinctly to themselves, what the difference is between their former hold of truth and that which they have come to have.

The weight which we are to attach to the "originality and integrity of Rome," is determined by the character of Christianity as light—ever, from moment to moment, its own present witness. When we know what we possess in Christianity, we know what place to give to the details of the history of its coming into our possession.

The power to shake faith put forth by historical criticism in our time, it possesses only, I believe, in virtue of our error in making our appeal so much to the *history* of revelation, rather than to the *character* of that which is revealed. Doubtless that history harmonises with that character, and by its harmony adds a commendation. The angels who

sang, "Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace, good-will towards men," were the fitting choir for such a song. But we rather believe that they were angels who sung because they *so sung*, than that the song is divine because they sung it.

Ever, my dear Bishop, yours most truly,

JOHN McL. CAMPBELL.

II.

THE SUBSTITUTION OF AUTHORITY FOR LIGHT.

Laurel Bank, Partick, Glasgow, 23d November, 1865.

MY DEAR BISHOP,—

I would greatly welcome any help in dealing with the Romanists, which we should have in a clear recognition by the Fathers of "the personal teaching of the Holy Spirit to be known by us as individual," as the peculiar distinction of this dispensation. At the same time, my great hope of winning acceptance for what I believe to be the truth on this subject is from pressing the unavailing character of any additions to, or explanations of, the "*letter*," which would *still be* BUT the *letter*. And this would be equally the character of such revelations as Montanus believed to be given through his prophets, and of such interpretations as the Pope might now offer to the faith of the Church. What we require is, not more of the letter, but of the spiritual capacity, which will enable us to apprehend and accept the letter which we have. This was the individual personal need of those to whom what is to us "the written word,"

was the teaching of living men above whose word surely the Pope would not exalt his own.

This was in truth the need even of those who were under our Lord's own teaching—a need, the more abundant supply of which was the essence of the promise of the Comforter, the spirit of truth. More abundant, I say, because in that receiving of his teaching, in the measure in which as yet they did receive it, they were not only the disciples of a Divine Teacher, but were individually taught of God; by which teaching of God they were separated from the rest in whose ears the words of that Divine Teacher were, as well as in theirs, but who received them not, "because they were not of God." It was no imperfection, of course, in the teaching that made the hearers of Christ's own words still to need the inward teaching of the Holy Spirit. Could any inspiration of Apostle first, or of Pope afterwards (assuming the Pope to stand where the Apostles stood), place men receiving the words of Apostle or Pope in a position that would cause the teaching of the Spirit, as a teaching of the individual, to be less needful, so that *now the word heard should be enough?*

I have not yet seen Dr. Manning's new book, and know not when I may. Dr. Pusey's I have, but have not yet had leisure to look into it. But I cannot, while I should hope to read them with a fair mind, say that I could read them as holding it to be an *open question* whether an assumed inspiration in the Church, uttering itself through Councils or Popes, is, by its authoritative interpretations of Revelation, to be the fulfilling of the promise of the Comforter who was to guide us to all truth; or that His "dwelling with us and being in us" was a promise to be realized by his

dwelling with the Church and being in the Church in such a sense as would oblige me to take his presence for granted, contenting myself with words from other men's lips falling on my external ear. Would such a presence of the Spirit in the Church as this make our position as individuals one in advance of those who heard our Lord himself speak as never man spake? or justify his words to the subjects of his personal ministry, "It is expedient for you that I go away; for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send Him unto you?"

The force and importance of what I now say is, you will see, altogether independent of the question of the truth or error of the teaching for which faith is demanded. Were I to see nothing in the decision of Councils or of Popes, from the beginning until now, but a divinely guided, say divinely inspired supplement to the Scriptures, presenting to the Church a true "development," I should still say—"not in *this* can I see the fulfilment of the promise of the Comforter, however much is thus added to that external teaching which God is pleased to combine with the inward teaching of His Spirit, to which it is providentially related, but which it never can take the place of, or supersede." Of course, as it is, the teachings of Councils and Popes, and of the Church as a whole, is not to me an inspired supplement to the Bible, which, under the teaching of the Spirit, I recognise and rejoice in as pure light. It is far otherwise, seeing that so much of it has to me no witness of the Spirit, but quite the contrary; and more especially this very doctrine upon the subject of the teaching of the Church, its claim to infallibility, and to being itself the fulfilment of the promise of the Comforter. This, no doubt, is but one of many

teachings which I am constrained to reject. But as Cardinal Wiseman said that "the infallibility of the Church is that gate to the Church by which alone any can enter the Church," so I would say that having "infallibility" inscribed on her gate is enough, apart from anything else, to oblige me to turn aside, and not seek to enter in.

I am not exactly doing what you ask me to do, for I have not been much occupied with this great subject, but have rather been thankfully feeling how unceasingly the Bible is to me its own witness, and has the light in it which makes it so, confirming me in the faith that what I need in reading it is teachableness—that teachableness which the Spirit of God works in me; but which no external power can, and for which blind submission to authority is no equivalent substitute—of which, shall I not rather say, such submission is the counterfeit?

Believe me, my dear Bishop,
Yours most truly,
JOHN McL. CAMPBELL.

III.

IS IT NECESSARY TO KNOW GOD IN THE SENSE OF HOW HE IS WHAT HE IS AND DOES WHAT HE DOES?

Partick, Glasgow, 5th April, 1866.

MY DEAR BISHOP,—

I fear you are thinking my reply to the questions of your letter long delayed; but I have been silent in part from not feeling sure that I understood your meaning.

I. A blank personality, of which you can predicate a will,

but not attributes, and which clothes itself with attributes by acts of will, I am unable to conceive of as what could be. Apart from the difficulty of conceiving of God as *coming* to be what He had not always been, how can the will to be good be regarded as other than goodness? The eternal choice of goodness is eternal goodness; and whence comes goodness to offer itself to the Divine choice if it is not already in God?

II. On the other hand, if you say that *God is God* BECAUSE *He is good*, and are not contented to say God *is*, and is *good*, then you are either vaguely conceiving of a something of the nature of destiny—call it a spiritual destiny—which secures by a necessity supremacy for goodness, and confers on goodness a *right* to all power and intelligence, which is really to recognise something as higher than God, and rewarding God because He is good; or you are assuming that it is the nature of goodness to be almighty, and have all intelligence, almightiness and intelligence in God being not *only* guided by goodness, but *inherent* in it; which is an assumed insight into the nature of goodness to which I find no response in me. To me, to say that "love is almighty" is to say what is true, because the Almightly is love; but I can no more say that He is Almighty *because* He is love than that He is love because He is almighty. His revelation of Himself, in all by which He makes Himself known to us, is a revelation of Himself as *both*, but not as the one because He is the other. Again, if the *infinite intelligence* manifested in God's work be that on which we fix our attention — *not* the infinite power — we come nearer to love as determining the ultimate end of intelligence, but still the same thing holds true—God is infinitely intelligent

and infinitely good; but not infinitely intelligent *because* He is infinitely good, any more than infinitely good because He is infinitely intelligent.

As to the *practical* aspects of such thoughts—if I neither say, first, "God is, and then chooses to be so and so;" nor, secondly, "Being so and so, He is then God;" but rather say,—"God is, and is so and so," I feel all the questions that you refer to as to eternal life and love, and how alone we are partakers in these, still to be *quite settled* to me by *what I say;* and I am unable to see how saying instead what your second alternative expresses, could settle them more certainly. For if I can say, "God is love," though I cannot say "Love is God," I say what necessitates that I shall have this love which God is, in me, *if* I am truly to *know* God and to live the divine life. So the "error of all religions which substitute anything for *being* the thing is patent." I quote your own words only to recall the latter part of your letter, in which you express what seems to you a commendation of the thoughts with which you have been occupied.

My dear late friend, Mr. Scott, used to like to dwell on the love of God in giving us love to be the law of our being; in this giving us the law of *His* own being to be the love of *our* being.

I am much interested by Mr. Ll. Davies' paper in *Macmillan* on Prayer: although suggestions as to *how* God can answer prayer are to me conceding *too much;* as if we could not justify our faith unless we were able to explain this "how,"—a demand on us to my mind as unreasonable as it would be to ask us to say how God made the world. Still, what he says is true and important, and can only be

rejected by the recognition of an *all-embracing* necessity, and not a *physical* only.

I can say love is *necessarily* holy, righteous, true; but I cannot say love is *necessarily* almighty.

Believe me, my dear Bishop,

Yours most truly,

JOHN MCL. CAMPBELL.

IV.

THE TRUE RESULTS OF LIGHT.

Parkhill, Arbroath, 15th September, 1866.

MY DEAR BISHOP,—

I have been waiting to write till I had more leisure, which I expected would be here; and before writing I have been reading a copy of my little book, the "Bread of Life," and I find what I had thought of saying brought out more fully and clearly in it than I had remembered it to be. I indeed think that on re-reading it you may feel a letter from me superfluous; although, were I writing on the subject now I should give more expansion than I have done to the idea that the second part of the Eucharist in the form of the mass, viz., the offering to God as a sacrifice what is also received as food, is parallel to the *Godward* aspect of the life of faith, viz., the life of *Son-ship* in us as "worship in spirit and in truth."

I have had no conversation with Mr. Erskine on the subject on which Mr. H—— wrote to you;* and indeed I am not anxious to take up that question, feeling in the

* The personality of the Holy Ghost.

language of personality that amount of intimation of the *fact* which agrees with the manner of teaching of the sacred writings, and is what, being used in faith, would be felt by the sacred writers enough for faith.

I have just been reading with great pain Professor Huxley's "Lay Sermons." It is indeed "another Gospel which is not a Gospel." I feel that to accept the worship of an "unknown God" would be to fall back into cheerless darkness out of "God's marvellous light." You know that I am not impatient of our limits, or hindered from the full enjoyment of light by the sense of remaining darkness—a darkness which will in part pass away when we come to "know as we are known;" but which may also, in part, continue for ever, and belong to the abiding difference between God as God and us to whom He has given a being.

I have just come from Linlathen, and am thankful for another visit to Mr. Erskine, for I meet in no one the same full realization of the gift of God as eternal life—the life of Christ to be our life—that I see in him. And this is a bond of the most sacred kind. Living this Divine life, in measure more or less, must be common to us all who love the Lord Jesus; but many are, through knowledge of Christ, partaking in His life whose own conception of their obligations to Christ refer, not to this, their true gain from Him, but to certain other advantages from faith which are either imaginary, or at best secondary. "My Son was dead, and is alive again," is the Father's joy over each of us that is "alive to God through Jesus Christ." The *consciousness* that it is so is our own peace and joy before God; that "witness that God has given to us eternal life, and that this

life is in His Son," which, St. John says, "he that believeth hath in himself" (1 John v. 10).

I am, my dear Bishop,

Yours most truly,

JOHN McL. CAMPBELL.

V.

ALL TAUGHT OF GOD.

Partick, 30th October, 1866.

MY DEAR BISHOP,—

I have never received the so-called "Manifestations of the Spirit" in the church which is connected with Mr. Irving's name as being in reality what they claim to be; but this, not because I did not believe that such gifts as were in the Church at the beginning might be restored to us, but because I had no positive grounds for believing that these were such gifts; while the teaching with which they were connected, and to which they seemed to put a seal, was to me positive evidence against the assumption of their Divine origin.

The teaching to which I refer is that which is common to this Church and to the Church of Rome, and is one with what has, under the name of Puseyism, been more or less developed in the Church of England.

I know that these three several forms of what is, to my mind, one thing, present themselves to us with distinctions which are held to be differences; but it is common to them all (1) to hold truth with such a reliance on teachers as appointed channels as is inconsistent with the Divine pur-

pose that "we should be all taught of God," and should "in His light see light;" and (2) to expect to feed on Christ as the bread of life otherwise than by the faith which beholds the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

Yours ever most truly,

JOHN McL. CAMPBELL.

VI.

THE SELF-EVIDENCING NATURE OF LIGHT.

Laurel Bank, 22nd November, 1866.

MY DEAR BISHOP,—

I am afraid I did not make my meaning plain, in reference to what you said about individual experiences which have been felt as light from God, *i.e.*, the distinction which seems to me to hold between such experience and what I understand as the *self-evidencing nature of light.* The distinction which I intended to mark is this—the self-evidencing nature of light is such a thing as one man may expect to make manifest to another, as the Apostle speaking of "By manifestation of the truth, commending himself to every man's conscience in the sight of God." But there may be experiences in the history of our personal intercourse with God which we cannot so commend to others, although they are to our own consciousness meetings with God. The value of these is the faith in the living God which they both imply and cherish. But their relation to an individual spirit in its *personal intercourse* with God implies an element distinct from the simple shining of the

light of what God is, or what He wills us to be. No doubt our realization of what God is and of what He wills us to be is often combined with our personal communion with Him; but the one may be without the other—for very clear light may be without communion, and communion may be without any fresh light. The study of the philosophy of Christianity tends to our resting in light without communion. On the other hand, your question as to the prayer, "Lord, show me the light of Thy countenance," I think connects itself with the *Religion* of Christianity as distinguished from its *Philosophy*. I do not understand such a prayer as asking for an increase of the light of truth, but as a prayer for a Divine personal acknowledgment of the individual as one choosing the life which is in God's favour.

But on re-reading your letter I feel that you must think I have said something which I cannot recall, and with which what I now write may not connect itself. Only I may add that so far from holding that we have no certainty that God is guiding us except such as we can commend and justify to others, I believe that the whole history of Revelation teaches us that the *perception of truth as truth*, and the consciousness that it is to the individual an *immediate revelation from God*, are quite distinct; the *former* being *common to all who really see truth by its own light*, the *latter* being the *additional thing* in the experience of the men through whom Revelation has been given and is what I believe to have been "additional" and *distinctive* in their consciousness in receiving that light, which, when received, they were to commend to the consciences of others. And this I believe was also their sufficient security from self deception in regard to any

Divine communication which did not contain in itself self-evidencing light.

That such communications do enter into the Divine plans seems to me certain, unless such expressions as "the word of the Lord came unto me saying," "God appeared to him in a dream," &c., are to be regarded as mere Eastern forms of thought.

Yours most truly,

JOHN McL. CAMPBELL.

THE END.

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[VIII.]

PRESENT-DAY PAPERS ON PROMINENT QUESTIONS IN THEOLOGY.

RECONCILIATION.

PREFACE.

THIS is the last number of the "Present-Day Papers." It completes the third volume, and will close the series for the present. Other Papers are in preparation, and will be given to the public, should it be deemed desirable; one on the relations of God to evil; one on the doctrine of election, or selection, as it is now called, viewed both in its physical and spiritual aspects; one (or more) on the nature and office of the Church; one on the mischiefs of a false Catholicism; and another on that of a false Protestantism; with some others. But at present the series will close. It has, it is hoped, helped to indicate a path whereby, as it is followed on, it is found that, rightly understood, Christ is not behind or in contradiction to true scientific and moral progress, but is its explanation and completion, and also to discredit that false conception of *method*, which would make it the object instead of the means whereby the object is attained.

The Editor takes the opportunity of thanking, with his full heart, those earnest and excellent men who have helped him in his labours, without whose help his labours would have been but little worth.

He also would take this opportunity of thanking Messrs.

Strahan and Co. for the painstaking care they have bestowed upon the work, and for the elegant form in which the "Papers" have been put forth. May they be some contribution towards the knowledge of God, and some help to those (for the "Papers" are but elementary) who are not far advanced in the heavenly kingdom.

A. E., Bp.

PALERMO, *March 25th*, 1871.

RECONCILIATION.

THE precise import of the word "Reconciliation," as applied to the work of Christ in redemption, was lately brought into question by the occurrence, in the Lambeth Encyclical, of the following phrase :—"Show forth before all men by your faith . . . . that ye are indeed the servants of Him who died for us to reconcile his Father to us." The adoption of this phrase into the Encyclical was objected to, both during the sitting of the Conference, and subsequently in Convocation, as appeared by the publications of the day, more particularly in the columns of the *Guardian* and *Spectator* newspapers. But the objection was overruled on the score that the expressions in the Encyclical were to be taken generally, that it was an "eirenicon," and not a definition of faith; and, therefore, the phrase, among others, was passed over as conventional. No doubt the original object of the Conference was not this, but rather was to lay down articles of belief, and to come to some definitions binding the Church on subjects then agitating her members, in particular the place and inspiration of Holy Scripture, and the limits to be allowed to ritual in divine worship. This, it was found, could not be accomplished, and so the Conference resulted

in the issue of an "eirenicon," or but articles of peace, and not, as had been intended, in a definition of faith or practice; an issue, we believe, by no means now to be regretted. Nevertheless it was felt then, and has been felt since, that if there was any departure from this principle, it was in the case of the expression now under consideration, which may not be actively employed without risk, and cannot be formally employed without error, unless we are of opinion that the salvation of man is an abnormal and exceptional act, and not in accordance with the normal and eternal operations of the divine nature. The Encyclical, having served its purpose, has fallen into oblivion; but the questions raised by its use of the word "reconcile" can never be without interest or importance to the Church, not only because questions arising out of the meaning of the word will ever and anon recur for settlement, connected as it is with the very foundations of our faith, but also and consequently because on a true apprehension of the meaning of the word and its place in revelation the very character and efficiency of redemption itself depend.

But the same mode of expression occurs in the second of the Thirty-nine Articles, where we read that "the Son truly suffered, was crucified, dead, and buried, to reconcile His Father to us." Is it fair, then, to object to the expression in the Encyclical which is to be found in the Thirty-nine Articles? To this it might be replied, that it is fair to do so if the expression is not found in Scripture. The scriptural expression, on the contrary, is that "God hath reconciled us to Himself," "God hath reconciled the world unto Himself" (2 Cor. v. 18, 19). But, besides this, the

phrase in the second Article must be taken with this qualification, that the object of the Article was not to define the nature of the reconciliation in Christ, so much as to define the nature of Christ Himself, and to assert His identity or unity with God; an assertion which would be much qualified if the meaning of the word "reconcile" were here the same as that which it seems to have when standing alone in the Encyclical. If the nature of Christ's work was, as there stated, to satisfy or reconcile God, then the work would have been done, external to God, by one who was not identical with God. The adoption of this view goes far to annul the objects which the incarnation was intended to effect. The object of revelation was to make God known, and thereby to evoke the sympathy and "fellowship" of mankind. Such a view as that in question is not only incapable of having this effect, but, we believe, has for many years given a backward tendency to and paralysed the vitality of the Church. It is evident, however, by the indifference with which the expression was passed over, both at Lambeth and in Convocation, either that there is little feeling of the importance of the question, or that the Church in our time has come to what must be called the unscriptural view of the subject. The latter is the most probable explanation. Indeed the unscriptural view has been the belief of the Church for a considerable period. We find it general soon after the time of Augustine; and it culminates to a head in Anselm, who, in his "*Cur Deus Homo*," may be said to crystallize the view previously held but in solution.

The scriptural and unscriptural views may be briefly characterized thus. The first view is, that the incarnation

and death of Christ are outgoings of the eternal nature of God acting according to its normal laws, and manifested for others in time as there was need; the second, that it was an exceptional and arbitrary act, on the ground of which God may dispense Himself from the ordinary operation of His laws, and which had its end in itself or towards Him. The first conception has for its foundation that the "nature of God is the ground of our hope, of which the incarnation and death of Christ are the revelation and proof;" the second, that the proofs themselves are the ground. In the first case the incarnation and death of Christ are conceived of as incidental to the object in view; in the second they are the object itself. This last conception makes the incarnation to have a retrospective or backward aspect towards God; and the other, a forward or prospective aspect towards man. The first contemplates the reconciliation of man, the second the reconciliation of God.

It is evident that two aspects, having such different objects, must have different operations and also different results. The first, having for its object the reconciliation of man, must operate by way of knowledge, and have for its end the position for man of a son; the other, having for its object the reconciliation of God, must operate by way of authority, and have for its end the position for man of a servant. The one operates by the commendation to us of God in that it reveals; the other, to say the least, effects no such commendation. It may produce submission, but not reconciliation. The interposition of God in Christ commends itself to our reason and conscience if it has its aspect towards man; in the other case it leaves itself out-

side of our understanding, or, so far as understood, without our sympathy. In the first case God is commended to us by that which is revealed of Him. The other aspect, as it does not enlighten us, so it cannot draw us near in any true sense. It draws us near, at the most, to an arrangement, and not to God Himself. Reconciliation can only be the product of love, and is begotten by love. It cannot be the product of anything like an arrangement. In the first aspect God is shown in the character of one coming forth to save others; in the second He is only shown forth in the character of one coming forth to save Himself; and love, not being seen in this reconciliation, on man's part cannot follow.

No doubt it will be said that not only is love seen in this, but that the arrangement spoken of is the outcoming of this love in such a way only as love could justly show itself, and that it commends itself to the understanding and conscience quite as much as the other view. To this, of course, there is no answer, except that when the two views are contrasted, the superior shows itself by its own light. But of this we shall make some enlargement farther on. In the meantime it may be enough to say that the historical development of the two views, both in individuals and churches, manifests which is the higher; that which supposes the incarnation to be an arrangement for the reconciliation of God, and which has been the more widely accepted, landing its votaries in the embrace of what is but a substitution for God, definitions and sacraments, doctrines of election and the mass, the main cause, we believe, of the halting progress of Christianity; while the other, so far as it has been received, has brought man into connection with God Himself. The

view which makes the incarnation and death of Christ a means whereby God might reconcile Himself to the salvation of man, if it has not absolutely prevented the reconciliation of man to God, has often gone far to do so. It may not have done so, because—although it has not had the effect, as it could not have had, of bringing men near to God, by showing them that which He did so as to beget apprehension and sympathy with it, and was an aspect which, at the best, could only be accepted as a mystery—yet, having in it the element of love, in ascribing the whole initiative and action to God, and apprehending and receiving the reconciliation as a boon, that is, as an outcoming of love, however unintelligible to our reason and understanding, it could not fail to produce some saving effect. But it will be apparent that if it has had this effect it has had it, not from the light which it afforded, but notwithstanding the absence of light; for whereas the mode whereby God's interposition in Christ was to operate for man's salvation, was to be by the revelation of the beauty of His moral nature, the view in question has the effect of clouding that moral nature, and is only saved from placing it below the standard of the nature which God has given to man by removing God from the category of man's understanding. It deprives the interposition of the character of a Revelation, and assuredly of its operation by means of commending the moral nature of God.

This conclusion has been, in some measure, averted by the expedient, adopted by Anselm and others, of a division of God's attributes into fatherly and rectoral, and the supposition of the one being harmonized to the other by an offering, a conception having its root in a non-apprehension

of the fact that holy love involves all righteousness. But this mode of dealing with the question belongs to that interpretation of Revelation which discriminates between contending views by the higher or lower approval of conscience and reason, and has no place in that school of thought which—forgetting that the Apostolic Epistles are a rationalizing of the Gospels, an attempt to commend them to our reason and conscience—objects to what is called the rationalizing of dogmas. Passing this by, however, and allowing the entrance of reason and conscience to the bar, it will no doubt be urged that the aspect of reconciliation which applies itself for its object unto God may be felt to commend itself as much to our reason and conscience as the other aspect, "For," it may be asked, "is it not seen to be as much in accordance with their laws as in the other aspect? Here God is reconciling himself to the acceptance of sinners by the offering of his holy Son; He is reconciling justice and mercy, as it is written, 'He made him to be sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him;' He is satisfied with the offering of His Son, 'that He might be just in justifying the ungodly;' He reconciles his own divine attributes by the sacrifice of Jesus, and thus can freely forgive sinners." But does it so commend itself? Does it so bring us to God, does it bring us to God by means of conscience and reason, and are we reconciled and brought near to Him thereby? Does the conception of the merits of one balancing the ill-deserts of another, and a transference of the merits of one and the penalties of another, bring us near to God? Does it commend Him to us? Does it of the two views commend itself to us as

the truer, judging, that is, by that reason and conscience to which an appeal has been made? Nay, is it of the nature of Revelation at all? For Revelation is the giving of light. This is the object and test of Revelation, and as true of its parts as of the whole. If anywhere there is question of degree the higher must rule the lower, and not the lower the higher meaning; where texts are quoted, therefore, they must be ruled by the general light, not it by them, and in them as in the whole that light is to be preferred which is the highest. Accordingly in the texts which we have mentioned the particular must be ruled by the general light, and the lower by the more high. Such meaning as that of the Psalmist must be given to them in consequence—"Just and righteous is the Lord, and *therefore* will he lead sinners in the way." God does not justify himself for justifying sinners, but the justification of sinners is the justification of God, and the object of the incarnation is the reconciliation of sinners, not the reconciliation of God himself.

The original conception, the true meaning, as we have said, of that great event, was its being the act of the eternal nature of God taking its expression in time according to man's need, of which the form and particulars were rather the incidents and accidents than the substance, ancillary, and neither its cause nor its end. The incarnation and death of Christ had reference rather to the prospective needs of man than to the, so to speak, retrospective needs of God. Its end, that is to say, was man, and not God. And although it may be said that this is compatible with the belief that such arrangement as is supposed by the other view (the previous justification of God by a sacrifice of substitution) was needful, ere He could

properly or beneficially deal with man, yet neither in this case can it be held that the cause or end of the action was the justification of God; while this interpolation, from its very nature, as experience has shown, necessitates such an obscuration, to say the least, of the nature and character of God, as to hinder if not to set aside the very object itself of the incarnation, namely, the salvation of man by the revelation of the higher moral nature of God. A conception which made the incarnation to have its chief end in itself could not fail to alter and bring down everything to its own level; this it did, and with such accelerating speed, that ere long that which should have been, and was, of the nature of light, became and was of the nature of darkness; the shadow of the light was taken for light itself, and forms of darkness for the light of Revelation.

When the sufferings of Christ came to be regarded as the object of the incarnation it inevitably followed that their value was centred in themselves, and that if they were that which warranted man's salvation they had a negotiable value, and if so the greater the amount the better. This terrible conception, clouded over in pious words, became universally accepted in the doctrine of the mass, and is to some extent also accepted in those aspects of Calvinistic doctrine which base election on the purchase, as it is termed, by Christ. And it works its way to other forms of error in every direction into which it turns. The sufferings of the Son, in which we read that the Father was well pleased, are conceived of as in themselves giving the pleasure; whereas the meaning surely is that, for the joy set before Him in the salvation of sinners, the Son underwent sufferings which it pleased the Father to see Him accept because

of the object in view. When a brother plucks his brother from the fire, and burns himself in so doing, the scars are important proofs and gauges of his love. But as they were not the end in view, nor could have been proposed as such by him, when he went to the rescue of the child, so, although honourable, and well-pleasing to the father who sees it, they do not, and cannot, as sufferings in themselves, yield him pleasure. Yet this had come to be the general conception at one time of the incarnation and death of Christ, and must remain so when the object of that interposition is thought to be the reconciliation of God.

When from being a revelation, a gauge of the Divine love to others, the incarnation is looked upon mainly as a justification of God, at the lowest the subject becomes involved in mystery, and the incarnation and death of Christ cease to be "the light of the world." From this reversal of the object of the incarnation have flowed most of the graver errors which have hindered the Church's progress—the reversal of her own true foundations by the conversion of the ministry into a priesthood, the turning of the sacraments into charms, and, worst of all, the postponing the first object and great power of Revelation, its giving us "fellowship" with the Father through giving us an "understanding" of Him, to relations with mere mystery and "an unknown God." No doubt there is a sense in which it is true that what we have called the "incidents" may be called the object of the interposition. For these—the "straitness" wherewith Deity was bound while in the flesh, the treatment of Christ by mankind, His contiguity to sin, the hiding of the Father's face—although but incidental, yet may be said to be the object of the interposition, as it is by

these that the end is accomplished. But it is evident that they are not the ultimate object, whether the reconciliation be that of God or man; and that, while in the one case the end is accomplished by revelation, that is, by revealing to man that which works the end, the moral nature of God as beyond that of man, in the other case they only have their place for an object still beyond, viz., the saving of man, that is, after their justification of God.

When this second view came generally to be adopted—that whereby the incarnation and death of Christ had for their first or main object the reconciliation of God—the language which spoke of God's interposition in Christ required to have its original meaning accommodated to the change. This accordingly was done, at first unintentionally and by degrees, but afterwards entirely and of purpose. Reconciliation ceased to be considered as man's being of one counsel with God, through understanding Him and having "fellowship" with Him by the understanding, and came to be considered as a term descriptive of a mode whereby man is accepted by God, irrespective of "fellowship" and understanding. Then the incarnation and death of Christ ceased to be considered as a revelation of God, whereby man should be saved by means of that which was revealed in Jesus, but were considered a means whereby he should be saved irrespective of his apprehending the revelation. In consequence, attention came to be fixed upon the mode, and not on the object of the interposition; or rather the mode came to be considered as the object, and Christ was said to reconcile the Father, God was said to receive a price, an offering which was soon turned into a negotiable equivalent, becoming in fact its

[VIII]

PRESENT-DAY PAPERS ON PROMINENT QUESTIONS IN THEOLOGY.

RECONCILIATION.

PREFACE.

THIS is the last number of the "Present-Day Papers." It completes the third volume, and will close the series for the present. Other Papers are in preparation, and will be given to the public, should it be deemed desirable; one on the relations of God to evil; one on the doctrine of election, or selection, as it is now called, viewed both in its physical and spiritual aspects; one (or more) on the nature and office of the Church; one on the mischiefs of a false Catholicism; and another on that of a false Protestantism; with some others. But at present the series will close. It has, it is hoped, helped to indicate a path whereby, as it is followed on, it is found that, rightly understood, Christ is not behind or in contradiction to true scientific and moral progress, but is its explanation and completion, and also to discredit that false conception of *method*, which would make it the object instead of the means whereby the object is attained.

The Editor takes the opportunity of thanking, with his full heart, those earnest and excellent men who have helped him in his labours, without whose help his labours would have been but little worth.

He also would take this opportunity of thanking Messrs.

and its consequences into operative entities complete within themselves. Invited to come to God freely without money and without price, men began to be invited to come because a price had been paid by the atonement, as the incarnation now came to be called, the result being transformed into the operative cause. God, who was the bestower, was supposed to be the receiver of that which He came to give. The Reformers themselves were chiefly to blame for the conversion of the summary of results into technical terms for operative causes. This they were led to by the necessity they supposed themselves under of combating the errors of the Church of Rome on the merits of works, by setting forth the sole merits and grace of Christ; a true view no doubt, but, in the result it had of giving a technical and active meaning at the same time to that which was general and passive, productive of evil; which evil has increased to that degree that it may be almost said, that the two greatest enemies which Christianity has had have been Catholicism and Protestantism—Catholicism by substituting the sacraments, Protestantism by substituting definitions, for God. Before the time of the Reformers the latter evil scarce existed. The word "atonement," at least, had a very different and better meaning than that to which it was altered in the Protestant confessions. It had its original meaning, that of reconciliation, not assuredly of a price paid, as the following example of its common meaning, from a letter of Edward VI., quoted for another purpose by Mr. Froude, sufficiently shows. "And where my good brother doth offer his travail, with the spending of his treasure, for the *atoneing* of the French King and me, I do give him hearty thanks." (*History of England*, vol. v. p. 484.)

Had the great obscuration of the object of Christ's death and incarnation never appeared, we cannot doubt that the spectacle of humanity would have been very different from what it now is; for it is on a true apprehension of that which God had in view in Christ that the real salvation of humanity rests. A real union with God, which is salvation, can only come by a true apprehension of the Divinity, of His relations to man, to sin, and of His mode of dealing with these. If we apprehend, as we conceive to be its meaning, that the Gospel is that God overcomes evil by good, and that this is the true meaning of the incarnation, that God in Christ appeared among us, not to reconcile Himself, but to reconcile us, then the effect will be produced which was the object of the incarnation, but not otherwise. If it *is* produced otherwise, with a wrong or imperfect apprehension of this, as we have said that at times it is and may be, then it is produced, not by means of such apprehension, but in spite of it, and by means of the surrounding and originating light by which it is involved. God, of whom are all things, reconciles us to Himself by giving us His mind in Christ, and by the sympathy which thereby is produced. (2 Cor. v. 18, 19, 20.) So that it is said that in Christ God reconciles the world unto Himself. How so? By purchase? No, by pardon; by "not imputing their trespasses unto them," as it is written; by making "Him," it says, "to be sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God thereby;" that we might be made righteous, of one mind with God, knowing God and having sympathy by means of the knowledge; all of which it was expressly the end and manner of the revelation in Christ to effect.

What the work and revelation really was, how it operates, and what its results have been when truly apprehended, we cannot better or more briefly describe than in the words of a very remarkable paper written by Mr. F. Seebohm, where, having first laid down what is the original and true conception of the incarnation and death of Christ, viz., an offering on God's part for the reconciliation of the world, he says;—"If there be one point more than another which distinguishes the Christian hypothesis from the hypothesis of heathen religion, it surely lies in this, that whereas your virtuous heathen, vexed by the capriciousness, and fickleness, and vindictiveness of ill-natured deities, seek by prayers and sacrifices to buy *their* favour, to change *their* hearts, to appease *them;* in the *Christian* hypothesis a God altogether righteous, of no changeableness nor shadow of turning, full of loving kindness towards men who had gone astray from him, brings *his* sacrifice in order to draw men back to Himself to change *men's* hearts; so that instead of heathen priests having on behalf of *men* to pray and beseech their *gods* to be reconciled to *them*, Christian ministers, if we may believe St. Paul, are, as it were, 'ambassadors for *Christ*, praying and beseeching *us* in Christ's stead, be *ye* reconciled to *God.*' And now comes the point—the verification in this respect also of the Christian hypothesis. Eighteen hundred years ago it was a problem whether Christ *could*, by the sacrifice he was willing to make of himself, reconcile men to God. It was impossible that the blood of bulls and goats should put God and man at one. The heathen hypothesis had been tried, and had failed in its verification. The number of professed believers in the one Invisible God had been an ever-dwindling one. The Chris-

tian sacrifice has, however, during these eighteen hundred years past, also been put to the test. It *has* reconciled thousands and thousands in every Christian generation to God. It has *more than reconciled* them. It has kindled in the hearts of Christians, from St. Paul downwards during eighteen centuries, and is kindling, a *love* of *Christ* so tender that the very mention of his name will sometimes bring a tear into the eye of the strong and the brave; a love not confined to his beloved disciple, or to one or two of his nearest companions, but so widely felt among Christians that there have been thousands in every age who would have been ready to die for him; a love, both in depth and extent, *unique* in the history of mankind. It—*the sacrifice*—has kindled this love. As a matter of fact in the lives of Christians it has been so. As iron only can be melted by heat, and is so melted every day in the forge, so the selfish heart can only be melted by *love*, and is so melted every day by the love of Christ. And the Christian, whatever his creed and whatever his theory, verifiable or not, to explain it, will give you this all but unanimous statement—that the *love of Christ*, from which his own heart took fire and by which it was melted, was brought home to him by the *self-sacrifice of Christ;* and this result, achieved by the love which burned in that sacrifice, has been wrought, be it observed, in spite of those strange perversions of its meaning which would fain have dragged it back into harmony with heathen conceptions of Divine injustice, vindictiveness, and partiality. It has been, in spite of its having been set forth by priests as the means used to change the heart of a once-alienated God, that it has achieved that work which no power of self-interest could achieve—the work of *changing*

—*of melting—the heart of man.* There is surely here an accordance with man's nature, an adaptation of means to an end, a wonderful stretch, if I may so speak of prophetic insight in the divination of a cause, so unlikely at first sight, and yet intrinsically so powerful to produce an effect so apparently hopeless, that it would be hard, I think, plausibly to account for it upon any other theory than that implied in the Christian hypothesis—viz., the reality of that 'Divine *love*' by which it is alleged that it was conceived and done." —*Fortnightly Review* for February, 1867, pp. 185-7.

Shortly subsequent to the Lambeth Conference there appeared, as we have mentioned, in the *Guardian* and *Spectator* newspapers, antagonistic pleadings for the two interpretations of the meaning of "reconcilement." That which argued for the use of the phrase as it appears in the *Encyclical* and in the second Article, pleaded its being the "received" interpretation and the authority of some early writers, particularly Chrysostom; that for the other view, the expressions of St. Paul (2 Cor. v.) and the higher internal light. The authority of St. Paul ought, no doubt, more than to counterbalance that of any non-inspired authority; and other inspired authority, save that of St. Paul, has not been quoted. What the higher light is may be matter of opinion; but as so much has already been said on the subject of the higher light and that which is its criterion, it is scarcely necessary to revert to that subject farther than by saying that, as in all cases that interpretation is to be preferred which contains the greater light or fuller revelation, so it cannot be doubted that the view which has for its principle that the incarnation had for its object the reconciliation of man rather than of God, contains and

throws a greater light as to God and the meaning of the incarnation than the other view; for it is impossible to believe that a transaction which has for its object a meaning which is unknown, can contain such light as one of which the meaning is obvious, and which derives its value from its meaning; and that meaning cannot be called obvious which makes the interposition of Christ to have for its object an offering to an abstract conception which, under the name of justice, is in fact the setting up of another and additional God; and to make the conception to have for its end suffering, that on the ground of this suffering further favour may be expected, instead of the suffering being the proof that all favour (gauged by the extent of that suffering) is ours already, cannot be called a higher, but a lower, and, in point of fact, an erroneous and misleading light; for in and by this misconception have all those views had entrance, which, indeed, meet us at every turn, but of which the marvel is not only that they do exist, and even excite no attention as untrue, but in all earnestness and simplicity are taken for the true. What more common, for example, than to see and hear earnest entreaties for pardon and acceptance, and the favour of God, on the ground of that which has been done for us in Christ, when the proof that it is ours, and is always ready for us, is given, and shown, and sealed in the infinite pledge and gauge ever before us on the cross? Such a notion makes the blood of Christ of no effect as a revelation of the Father, so that Jesus, who says, "O righteous Father, the world hath not known Thee," and who came to make Him known, because the world perished for lack of knowing, is thus made the means not of making known and revealing the Father, but of con-

cealing and removing Him. It is said that God so loved the world as to give His Son for it. But this conception reverses the order, and says that because God loved the Son He gave the world to Him for His sufferings, *i.e.*, for a price. Hence arose all those distorted views which, culminating in the equivalent of the Mass (and a selling price for it), when at their worst, no doubt, brought on reformation; but the germ of the same views is ever present, when it is taught that by the incarnation and death of Christ God is reconciled unto Himself. That the Mass may be rightly conceived of we do not doubt; but its naked conception, that of a price, is fundamentally erroneous, and has its origin in the mistaken aspect of reconciliation. What that naked conception is in the Roman view is well seen, if we look at it where there can be no mistake as to its meaning; as, for example, where it is set forth as offered for the dead, when enjoined by the Council of Trent under the head of Purgatory, where it is evidently conceived of as a price or equivalent paid to God:—"There is a purgatory, and the souls there detained are helped . . . . . chiefly by the acceptable sacrifice of the Altar." We cannot doubt that a premiss which leads to these results is false, and that the falsity is engendered by the reference being made to God instead of to man. With a return to the true order, the reference being made to man, everything falls into its own place, and no such evil results ensue. Which is therefore not only the higher but the true light is evident.

That authority is to be found for the lower view in early writers is doubtless to some extent true; but it has to be carefully considered whether these, when they use expressions significant of it, use such formally or only in the way

of devotional fervour, a cause which has given rise, when words so used have received a dogmatic character, to many and dangerous modern errors. It has to be considered, too, whether these authorities are of the earliest date and highest significance. But, were they so, we must ever distinguish between men living in the glory of the highest light, seeing face to face, and endeavouring to describe what they saw, and those who but inherit their expressions without the open vision. We are right with a godly jealousy to guard and retain the expressions of such men: but we must be careful that we do not inject into the expressions a meaning which was not theirs. This has often been done, and is generally done, by theological writers; and nothing in consequence is more shocking to the childlike mind than to turn from the words of Christ and writings of His first apostles to the history and controversies of the Church. But let us look at one or two examples of authorities. Chrysostom has been much relied on as giving his voice in behalf of the interpretation which we have rejected. He is quoted as saying, in support of this, "But nevertheless, although our sins were so many, He not only did not exact punishment, but even was reconciled;" where surely the sense lies in the other direction, that of a free forgiveness, especially if, as we believe, he had in view the parable of the two debtors, whom, when neither had anything to pay, the creditor, our Lord declares, frankly forgave; giving this to be our example for our dealings with our fellows. Here there is no reference to payment (or atonement, as we should now call it); and, in fact, if there were, the point would be destroyed. Again, Dr. Mason Neale has been quoted, as where he says of Christ upon the cross,

"He first showed that he was reconciled to his brother, and then came and offered his gift." Yet surely here also the meaning is the other way; for the reconciliation is made to *precede* the gift, whatever he meant that to be; and we do not doubt that what he meant was that, having forgiven, having it in his heart to forgive, "God's nature and property ever being to have mercy and to forgive," He came and manifested or pledged the forgiveness by the infinite grace or testimony or offering of the cross.

But, no doubt, the cause of much of the darkness of ages subsequent to the apostolic, is owing to professed theologians having taken the place of those who had seen the Lord. Repeating but the words of those who had seen, from a very natural reverence, in overvaluing the letter they lost the spirit of the communication; mapping and laying out the places and the meanings of words into different compartments of thought, "in laying bare they sealed;" and this never more than when, rushing in where angels fear to tread, they dissected and distributed the Divine nature, until all was apparent in it but the life which they had destroyed. For to dissect it so as to provide balances and equivalents, and above all to suppose by this to secure that result which is only procurable by the abnegation of all such provisions, was not only to destroy the truth of the revelation, being that of love, but the effect which such a revelation would have engendered. The revelation in Christ, the object of which the creeds express in the terms "forgiveness of sins," is made meaningless and powerless when that revelation and object are thought to be accomplished by an arrangement of purchase or equivalent. The meaning and power of the revelation consisted in its being a declaration

of the free forgiveness of sins, "without money and without price," of which the outpouring of the blood of Christ was the gauge and proof, love freely giving, love freely accepting, pardon and confession of sin, love offering free forgiveness, that contrition and confession should be the result. The power resided and was to reside in the fact of the freedom of the offer and the state of mind, so to speak, of Him that offered, of which the incarnation of Christ, before man's contrition, was the exhibition and guarantee. This was to put away sin. Christ was to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself, by the manifestation of the love of God for the world ere it was brought to its right mind. This, fully understood, was to bring it to its right mind, and bring in an everlasting righteousness. The righteousness of Christ was to do this, to do it by his feeling the righteousness of doing it ere it was done. He came therefore to do it, and by doing it to give His life a ransom for many, and to have the iniquities of all laid upon Him, that He might purge sin out of men by their union and reconciliation with Himself. But all this is frustrated, and the meaning and power gone, when the incarnation of Christ is thought to be but an arrangement whereby God can be reconciled to forgive.

The error, no doubt, has its root in a fixed preconception of that which God must be, and a non-recognition of that which He is in Christ. It in fact rests on a conclusion which deprives Christ of His essential Godhead. Nothing can be further from the thoughts of those who at present defend this view. Yet it is true that they deprive Christ of His essential Godhead, and by this view become, what they call others, Unitarians. For he is not the real Unitarian (using the word in its bad sense) who says that God is One,

but he who, by requiring an external action, deprives Christ of His identity with God. Such make God save the world for love of His Son, while the Scripture says He saves the world from His love of itself — that love, seen in Christ, of which St. Paul spoke as something from which "nothing can separate us, neither height nor depth, nor any other creature." His saying that all things are yea and amen to us in Christ, which is not addressed to individuals, but to the world, is surely no declaration that God has shut up in Christ and saved for His sake some for reasons known to Himself, which He is able to do from the price given in Christ's blood, but that He so loved the world as to give Christ, and in Him is so reconciling the world to Himself, that, if the proof and gauge of His love is there seen, nothing can separate us from Him.

But surely one would think that a little study of the nature of things would tend to rectify any interpretations of Scripture which would throw revelation into antagonism with the things with which we are most conversant as being certain and true. If we consider, for example, the eternal nature of God, the impossibility of His undergoing essential change, and, on the other hand, the mutability and necessary imperfections of creation, it is evident that when aberration takes place, as in the latter case it is sure to do, that which has to be rectified or reconciled is not the creator but the creature? Atonement, or putting at one again, must refer to reconciliation on the part of that which has gone out, a return of the wanderer, not of Him who never altered. If His attraction draws again, as it does in Christ, by a going forth as it were of the original in Him, still He does not go back upon Himself, but forward, to meet that

which had been lost. When in Scripture the wrath of God is spoken of as having to be appeased, do we not mean that the harmonies we have disturbed avenge themselves into harmony again by the discord being reduced? Law avenges itself by the loving providence of God, but He never changeth Himself; the appeasing of His wrath is but another name for the healing of the wound by remedies, which may indeed be painful; but in no case is God healing or reconciling Himself, but His creation solely.

The difference between the meanings of the two reconciliations, when stated in words, may seem but a verbal difference; but if we examine we shall find that although the streams appear to, and no doubt in one sense do, issue from the same source, still there is a difference in the current, which, divided by an apparently inconsiderable water-shed at first, finally leaves them in different oceans—an ocean of light on the one hand and one of darkness on the other. For the water-shed which separates them is this, the fact that one is a revelation bringing us into the presence of a God whom it makes known, the other into the presence of a God who is left unknown as ever; the one view is a revelation, and the other is not. It is true that in the latter case there is often a saving result; but this is by means of that which is guessed to be included in the gift, not by means of seeing what that which is included is. The one makes servants, in fact, and the other sons. By the one view God is represented as doing a strange and exceptional thing, having done which He may, in virtue of it, go on to farther exceptions, or, as it is said, apply its merits to other cases, as is done in the "Mass," and in speaking and praying in similar language among ourselves; in the other view He is set forth as doing

that which it ever is in His nature to do, and of which the incarnation and death of Christ were but the exhibition and pledge, as all recognise in our prayer, "O God, whose nature and property is ever to have mercy and to forgive," as contained in the English Liturgy. Christ's sacrifice was not, therefore, an offering to justice, but a proof and gauge of the Divine forgiveness to all who feel their need of it, and an incentive to feel their need to those who do not. In no case does this view of it make Christ the minister of sin; for those who see it and seek it not are as they were, while those who see and seek it are thereby cleansed. And by it only, seen as a sign of forgiveness, do any realize the true nature of sin and are brought to sorrow for it.

That the sacrifice of Christ was a propitiation whereby penalty or punishment was averted, we cannot believe, if we look at the facts of daily life. If death be looked on as the penalty of sin, death still reigns. The believer in Christ is not delivered from any of the pains and sorrows of humanity which are supposed to be the fruits of sin. Many of these are so, but not all. And as our Lord tells us that those on whom the tower of Siloam fell did not incur that death from special guilt, and that the blind man whom He healed was not born blind because of his own sins, or those of his parents; as, moreover, we see death and suffering in most of its forms in the vestiges of creation which remain from the time anterior to humanity; and as some of the greatest sufferers are those who have been born out of all knowledge of God and Christian redemption; so it is impossible to attribute to the death of Christ the effect which it is said to have when it is called a propitiation for the removal of penalty. In truth God never interferes with

penalty, which is the beneficent operation of His own laws.* It is given for the cure of sin, and with the cure of sin penalty necessarily disappears. We too often confound the necessary result of actions with the idea of penalty. If a man break his leg, lameness is the consequence; if he is given to lies, he ceases to obtain credence. It would, however, be wrong to call lameness a penalty, or to be disbelieved a punishment. In some sort, no doubt, they are so, but not in the usual meaning, not, that is, as by arbitrary judgments; they are but the natural results of error. The death of Christ, by reconciling us to and uniting us with God, lifts us out of the region of sin, and lifts us at the same time beyond the region of penalty. So long as we abide in that light we are safe from moral penalties, and the eternal life is ours; it also bestows a new, a resurrection life to the body. This, however, is all owing to the death of Christ, and therefore is called, and rightly, the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and has been called His "merits;" but the last is a dangerous word, apt to be mistaken, as it too often has been, as by the consequences is apparent.

This is, in fact, the Gospel or good news of the Grace of God in Christ, that by his incarnation and death we are enabled to see and draw nigh unto God in conscious knowledge and heartfelt adoration, in consequence, that is, of what we see He is in Christ. And the point of this revelation is not only that by it is Love declared and forgiveness, but that the "manner" of Love is that we should become sons; sons and not less—sons by knowing and having sympathy, or "fellowship," with the Father—that is, with God—by seeing

* Even where he does so in the special case of Lazarus, Christ, as it were, explains, saying,—"because of those that stood by I did it."

and rejoicing in that which He is revealed and declared to be in Christ. And thus Christ's life is said to be the light of men, because He thus gives us to see the right thing to be, to do, and to avoid in life. God gives, as it were, mixed seeds to the world in Christ. He teaches us to select and sow, to avoid the evil and choose the good, and to avoid the sad knowledge which is the result of the evil sowing. So in Christ, the second, He restores what we lost in Adam, our first head. And therefore it is said, "Blessed are the eyes which see the things which ye see." It is a vision which gives us the fulness of this life, and an assurance of an eternal life beyond; for in their nature such things are eternal, and Christ is risen as their first fruits from the dead.

It is to the conception of the incarnation and death of Christ being a means whereby God could dispense pardon, and not the manifestation of that which He is, that we must trace all the subsequent doctrines of limitation which flow from it. For it is evident that the idea of a set number being included in the benefits of Christ's death, that is, the doctrine of an Election of persons, and of the sacrifice being bounded in its extent, is to be traced to this conception. No doubt the facts of daily experience in a certain sense bear out this view. For few in this life either avail themselves of, or ever are made aware of, the Christian Redemption, and fewer still abide in its light to the end. But yet all must balance against this the facts that this life includes but a small portion of human existence, and that the reconciliation of all things "in heaven and earth" by means of Christ is set forth as a thing certain "to be testified in due time." And when it is said that "eye hath not seen nor ear heard the things which God hath pre-

pared for them that love Him," and that it hath not entered into man's heart to conceive them, it is probable that allusion is made not to a future of a different kind from the past so much as to an intelligent recognition of that which ever has been, and of which the incarnation and death of Christ were the pledge and proof, that love of God which ever is, was, and shall be to His creatures the same. "The Lamb, slain from the foundation of the world," is set forth in the Apocalypse as the eternal centre of worship. Therefore by the cross we may now and ever enter into that which is, and was, and shall be, that fulness of God, of which there can never be more or less, but ever the same in the past, the present, and the future. For that which was the cause of the revelation on the cross was in God from eternity, as to eternity it will remain, that Divine Love which, by one manifestation in time or one offering, perfects for ever those who are sanctified, those, that is, who do not see in the cross an exceptional act on the part of God, but that which is there ever, and always, and seeing this wash their robes in the blood of the Lamb. The recognition of this has sanctified multitudes, the realization that grace is ever in God, the grace seen in Christ Jesus—a perception which, however dimly apprehended, brings man nigh to God, and which brings him still more nigh just as he apprehends that the grace was truly gratuitous, as its name implies; as he recognises, in short, that the primary object of the incarnation was the salvation of man, and not the justification of God.

It is strange that this view should have come to be rejected apparently just as man seemed to have most need of it, first by the introduction of a doctrine of works, merits, grace of congruity, and other supposed previous qualifica-

tions for pardon, and now by the conception of the necessity of provision on the part of God for some compensation for the bestowal of pardon. It is difficult to reconcile the meaning of the words pardon or forgiveness with the conception of a requirement at the same time of an equivalent or compensation; but in our time this view has come to be accepted, and it is now conceived that provision must first be made for God's honour and the security of his government ere pardon can be bestowed. "Justice," it is expressed, "must first be satisfied;" and this, it is supposed, was done by the sacrifice of Christ. There is a certain sense of propriety in the conception, and a false humility bids man approach in this way rather than in any other. Yet is it not self-evident that by this conception we deprive the death of Jesus Christ of its grace, and God's manifestation of His love and acceptance of us, sealed and shown in Christ, of its gratuitousness, and put Him far off by the very means He Himself took to draw near? When we turn the declaration of the love of the Father, and the revelation of his heart by the Son who is ever in his bosom, into a conception of payment and washing of hands, ere God could draw near and lift up that groaning and travailing and lost creation, which cries, "Despise not thou, O Lord, the work of thine own hands," surely we then wholly miss the meaning of the grace of God in Christ, the approach of God to us as one of ourselves, bearing our burdens, carrying our sorrows, having the iniquities of all laid upon Him, sharing our nature and taking part in the same, that we might know by the proof in Christ that we are not alone, and that God had not made all men for nought, but that He ever has mercy upon them, that His part is ever to have mercy, that

through much tribulation (as it is the only way) He is bringing us safe to His kingdom. This is the Gospel, this is the good news which helps up fallen and enables weary and worn humanity to bear the burden of life. To put any other meaning on it is to leave men practically unhelped, and is in fact to deny the Gospel, by making its intentions dim and "doubtsome," shutting up its benefits to a few mysterious individuals of mankind, who themselves, if they came to think, would find the contemplation of the supposed tokens of election not full of "sweet, pleasant, and unspeakable comfort," but rather suggestive of the arbitrary character of the unknown God. But God did not "so" love the world, and this is not the grace which is in Christ Jesus. That grace is a declaration to the world of the unspeakable love of the Father to His creatures, bidding them come to Him, trust in Him. "And I," Jesus says in his most pathetic self-denial, "if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me."

Alas, were it otherwise, for those multitudes who have never heard of the cross, or hearing have mistaken it to be a means of pardon for the elected, supposing its end to be in itself. What do those who take this view of the cross, and consider its object to have been the "reconciliation" of God, make of the cross, but that sacrifice of "corban," of which the Lord Himself speaks with abhorrence. Surely it is impossible for sinners to hold this view? Yet it would appear, on the contrary, that just in proportion as men need a free forgiveness, so do they stumble at it, and object to a forgiveness which is gratuitous. Yet is not this a proof itself of their need of such? For were they in their right state, did they know what the grace of God does mean, they

would know also that the gift of grace includes all righteousness; or rather, they would know that freedom is essential to, and the proof of, love, and that holy love, while it bestows, demands also all fulfilment. For no moral truth can be more certain than this, that love and righteousness are one, and that love involves all right requirement; as by love also alone can law have its true fulfilment. But the non-apprehension of this has turned aside the Gospel, and given birth to all those strange conceptions wherewith it has been clouded over—substitution, equivalents, schemes of redemption, and such like. Nay, from the necessity of the case it has intruded into the very sanctuary of God, and has divided the Divine nature into parts, arranging according to its requirement the attributes of God, in patterns suitable to its own necessities, venturing near to change the ineffable unity of God into the composite nature which is attributed to man, of whom some of our philosophers have conceived the idea that he is made of parts—understanding, memory, will, all made separate, and then put together as an artificer puts sleeves, and collar, and body to compose a garment. And strangely, it is those who are most afraid of that which is termed "rationalizing" in religion, who are most given to indulge in such conceptions. Not that we object to the use of reason, applied to discover the meaning of revelation. For as revelation by its own signification means something revealed, because it can be and ought to be understood, so it cannot be understood but by the use of that reason to which it is addressed. Reason, therefore, ought to be used. But let us be sure that it is really used. If this be done, then we cannot doubt that the higher light will prevail.

The discourses of our Lord, the arguments of his Apostles, are all addressed to the human reason; and if we listen to and examine them, and imbibe the spirit which they breathe, we shall by our reason thus exercised be led into the knowledge of all needful truth. Nay, it is from a non-exercise of reason in matters of revelation that revelation has ceased to be operative in so many lands. From its non-exercise multitudes of false conceptions and substitutions of other things have gathered round and superseded the Gospel of Christ, so that, as these lose their hold—as in process of time such aberrations ever do—the Gospel and Christ Himself are supposed to be things of the past and ready to vanish away, while in point of fact in the great majority of such places they have never been seen or heard at all. Or in other cases, where the matters substituted were so different from the true conception as instead of blessings to be curses, the name of Christ itself has become odious in many lands, and his so-called ministers looked upon as the authors of all evil and the enemies of the human race, obstacles to improvement, and in the way of all good, so that ever and anon they are risen against and swept away with a bloody besom; and men at a loss for good, seeking it everywhere, and not dreaming to find it in the name of Christ, relapse to the old religions of nature, and turn to the *bona dea* or to *madre natura* as their sole help and guide. Poor men! many of whom are of the excellent of the earth, but who never had a chance of hearing of a higher heaven than Olympus, although living, as in Spain and Italy, all their lives in the bosom of that which is called the Church. Far as the stream has flowed from its original fountain there, and dark as is the ocean to which it flows, it was but a little and

perhaps a non-recognised thing which turned it aside at its source. That which did so was the microscopic point within the water to which we have before alluded, which, turning back the current upon itself, made it flow away into darkness; and the point was this, the notion that Christ in his sacrifice did not taste death for every man, but died for the reconciliation of God. This little point in the midst of the fount of Calvary it is which has sent so much of its water into the dead sea, and not into the river of life. Let us beware of it; the time has come to look for it in almost every statement of the Gospel. Happily, along with this darkness, there has arisen a great light—the light, namely, which bids us look at the Gospel by its own light, and not by the light of another, which teaches that that which Christ is in Himself is the proof of his divinity. And this being seen and received, as now it is more and more day by day, will swallow up the darkness which has so long encompassed us. This commends itself when seen, because it corroborates and directs the light of nature, and is an explanation of and deliverance from its mysteries and lower life, and is felt to be a revelation and a help; whereas the other view is but a deepening of her mysteries, and only a partial deliverance from her lower life. To receive the latter one has to contradict the first natural principles; to receive the former is to have them purified and confirmed.

But in saying that the Gospel received aright is but a confirmation and purification of our natural and first principles, may it not be said that we then throw over that which revelation was given to bestow? The answer is that revelation did not come to destroy but to fulfil. Revelation is addressed to that which is already in us, else would its

mission be useless and its appeal vain; it is given to complement, not to supplant, and is the teacher but not the creator of nature. In Jesus God is shown as that which our hearts before prophesied God to be. In Him "the desire of all nations" came; and if the Jews rejected the Messiah, it was because they expected only a Messiah for the Jews, not one who would find his response in every human heart. This is coming to be recognised, and its first fruits are already precious. Christ is coming to be recognised not as something special and outside of God, and to be defended as the most divine of men, but as so divine as to be God Himself, one with the Father, by whom we come to the Father, and in coming find Him one. To be relegated back to manhood is not the risk the person of Jesus in our days runs, but that all of deity will be absorbed in Him. But the risk from this is small. Coming to the Father by the name of Christ we know now how to ask, and are not hindered by having to make a mental and artificial arrangement ere we venture to approach. Now we know that the Father Himself loveth us, for the Father is seen in Christ. And we know that He loves us, not for Christ's sake only, but for our own sakes, for it was for us He gave his Son. We do not conceive that God had to reconcile Himself to Himself ere He could go forth to bless, or justify Himself to Himself or others, ere He could pour oil and wine into the wounds of the suffering traveller, or to bargain with another for our deliverance. Possessing all power and authority in Himself, "if it be God who justifieth, who is He that condemneth?" In Christ He comes to seek and to save the lost in such a manner as to find them. Their loss was occasioned by their loss of the

knowledge of God; Christ came to supply that loss. He did it in such a way as to be a guarantee of the truth, and a gauge and proof of the will of God. The gift was bestowed in suffering. Its result was to be the restoration of man by reconciliation, or the evocation of sympathy in man to God, and the exaltation of man thereby to "fellowship" with God, thus giving him an "understanding" to know God. All conceptions which are short of this, as they cannot produce the effect, are necessarily frustrative of it—frustrative, that is, of the Gospel, of which the efficiency surely is signified when it is called "a *Revelation*." Child-like faith, indeed, accepting anything as from the hands of God, may bring one nigh to Him by the power of its own trust; but how much higher would it bring him if such a one realised that which the gift is in itself, the gift which God gives in Christ, the gift to know Him as the Father? "All knowledge of God's ways is profitable to man, and no Scripture is of more cheering import than that which says that 'the spirit of truth' is also the Holy Ghost the Comforter,"* so that the more we know the greater is our peace; yet how much greater if we remember that that knowledge expressly is of the mind and heart of God, given to us in Jesus, and given that by this knowledge we may be "reconciled to God."—(2 Cor. v. 18, 19, 20.)

THE following letters from the Rev. F. D. Maurice, the Rev. Dr. John McLeod Campbell, and Thomas Erskine of Linlathen, on the use of the word "reconciliation" in the Lambeth Pastoral, were addressed to the Bishop of Argyll

* Campbell.

shortly after its publication, as the question had been raised how far that document involved the Church of England in an unscriptural view of the object of Christ's incarnation and death.

FROM THE REV. F. D. MAURICE, PROFESSOR OF MORAL PHILOSOPHY, CAMBRIDGE.

Hamilton Villa, Weston-super-Mare, Oct. 6, 1867.

MY DEAR BISHOP,

I confess that I was not struck by the sentence, or clause, of the Lambeth Pastoral letter to which you refer. I read it over twice without even noticing that there was such a one. I *was* struck and pained by the omission in such a document of any allusion to the living Word—by the want of any recognition of the principle which *the* theologian regarded as the ground of his theology—while there was so laborious a statement respecting the claim of the Scriptures to a title which they rarely claim for themselves. But you were right, I think, in not protesting against language, which interpreted by the Articles and the history of the Reformation, means an assertion of the *lex scripta* in opposition to oral traditions and ecclesiastical decrees, and which (interpreted by the same Articles and the same history) cannot be intended to disparage or ignore Him who is one with the Father, and the Light of Men.

And here comes in the other point. There is no assertion in all our (dogmatic) formularies of the living Word as the root of all life and good to man, so distinct as that which is contained in the Second Article. I have always

turned to that Article, occurring where it does, as the great witness for a Theology constructed, not like that of Knox or the Westminster Assembly on the basis of the Fall, but on the basis of Redemption; or rather on the original Constitution of men in the only-begotten Son, by which the Redemption itself must be interpreted. If any one separates the words "reconcile the Father to us" from the context of the Article, and grafts them on another scheme of divinity—one which supposes Christ to have "suffered and been crucified, dead, and buried," that He might persuade the Father not to *punish* men, or a certain portion of men, for their original guilt or their actual sins—he simply changes the whole meaning of the language to which we have subscribed; *he* ought to recall *his* subscription. There is the most utter and entire avoidance of that vile notion in this Article, and in every one which succeeds it. Christ has died and been buried to take away *sin*, not to exempt any from the punishment of sin. And what is *sin?* Separation from God, a breach between the creature and Him, in whose image he is made, a division between the child and the Father. *In this sense* (which is the sense of the Article) it is as true that Christ reconciles the Father to us as that He reconciles us to the Father. In His own person He destroys the barrier between us and Him; till that is removed there can be no *atonement:* the Father may seek reconciliation with us but He is not reconciled to us.

I wish you would seriously consider the Article in this light—not only dismissing the other notion, but regarding the Article as the most effectual protest against it. If the Bishops refer to that Article as the justification of their phraseology they not only make it innocent, but do some-

thing to fill up the omission in the Pastoral of which I complain. Believe me, my dear Bishop,

Very affectionately yours,

(Signed) F. D. MAURICE.

P.S.—Your fragments on Unity, which I had not read when I wrote this, illustrate, it seems to me, what I have said in it. They speak of harmony, or unity, with the Father, and of sin being taken away that there may be this harmony. The mind of perfect goodness cannot be in harmony with the mind of a creature who has sinned (*i.e.*, cannot be reconciled to that creature) unless the obstacle is taken away. Of course *God* must take it away, and that is declared by the Article when it asserts with such vehemence and distinctness that the Son is of one substance with the Father; that His mind is the perfect expression of His Father's mind. If the Article is true, the notion of His inducing the Father, by any act, or suffering, or intercession, to change His will or purpose, is heresy. I do not mean that I would take a step to hinder men who hold that heresy from possessing offices and high places in the Church; I mean that we are clearly not bound to hold it ourselves, and may always and in all places assert the doctrine which it contradicts.

THE BISHOP OF ARGYLL AND THE ISLES.

FROM THOMAS ERSKINE OF LINLATHEN.

Linlathen, 8th October, 1867.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

The inversion of the "reconciliation" in the Pastoral is very remarkable, making God the Reconcil*ed* instead of

the Reconciler. But what are you to do? You must set the sixth Article against the second, quoting in support 2 Cor. v. 19, and Col. i. 20, 21, and Rom. v. 10.

There can be no question that the wording of the second Article is opposed to Scripture, and that those who acknowledge the authority of the Scripture ought to join their endeavours to have that false wording corrected.

I should say that the Pan-Anglican meeting at Lambeth would be an event for which the Church of England would have reason to give thanks to God, if the prelates there assembled could be induced, by the consciousness of having committed this blunder, to acknowledge their error in following the Articles rather than the Scriptures, and to take steps to do away with the discrepancy that exists between them.

Unless the prelates consent to make this acknowledgment, they will subject themselves to the charge of deliberately persisting in error after they have seen it to be error, merely because they will not confess that they have been wrong, or of persisting in upholding the authority of the Articles of the Church against the authority of the Scriptures and of all real theological thought.

My dear brother, let us lift up our hearts to God in this matter, praying Him to make darkness light and crooked things straight. He hears prayer, and He is the Ruler of all things.

Yours affectionately,

(Signed) T. ERSKINE.

THE BISHOP OF ARGYLL AND THE ISLES.

FROM THE REV. DR. J. M'LEOD CAMPBELL.

Laurel Bank, Partick, Oct. 11, 1867.

MY DEAR BISHOP,

I have unwillingly lost some posts in replying to your letter which I received on the 7th. . . . .

As to the difference between speaking of reconciling God to man, and of reconciling man to God, so long as the error of dividing between the Father and the Son, ascribing holiness and righteousness to the Father, and love and mercy to the Son, is not fallen into, such language presents but *two aspects* of *one reality* which would be included in the expression "reconciling God and man." "How can two walk together except they be agreed?" "God is angry with the wicked every day," while "His countenance doth behold the upright."

I remain most truly yours,

(Signed) J. McL. CAMPBELL.

FROM THE REV. DR. J. M'LEOD CAMPBELL.

Laurel Bank, Partick, Oct. 12, 1867.

MY DEAR BISHOP,

As to the II. Article, it is not any question as to the *nature* of the Atonement that is prominent in it, but rather the question of the *completeness* and *adequacy* of the Atonement as embracing actual, as well as original, sin; as to

which there was so much controversy between the Reformers and the Church of Rome; for the Church of Rome limited the efficacy and adequacy of the Atonement to original sin in leaving all peace-making as to our actual personal sins to be accomplished by penances, and the due observance of the Church's institutions for that end.

I am,

My dear Bishop,

Yours most truly,

(Signed) J. McL. CAMPBELL.

FROM THE REV. DR. J. M'LEOD CAMPBELL.

Laurel Bank, Partick, April 15, 1868.

MY DEAR BISHOP,

I think I have in conversation spoken of the ambiguity connected with the expressions "reconcile," "reconciliation." They are, I know, used in a sense in reference to the Atonement, in which they are unquestionably a misrepresentation of the mind of God towards man; yet it seems to me very difficult to reject the use of them altogether, and yet not seem to deny something that is true, and which they may fitly express. The difficulty to which I refer is, in fact, one part of the difficulty that is found in rejecting wrong views of the nature of the Atonement without denying the reality of an Atonement altogether.

I think I have said to you that I have found it trying to meet, as I have done, cases in which the "prospective"

aspect of the Atonement is recognised, while its "retrospective" aspect is rejected; or, to express the state of mind to which I refer a little differently, the recognition of a need-be for a Mediator between God and man, but not for a Mediator between man and God.

It has been said that "Christ is God toward man, and man toward God." What I object to may be expressed as seeing Christ as God toward man, but not seeing Him as man toward God. The faith that brings us into oneness with God—that harmony in which we walk together ("how can two walk together excepting they be agreed?")—must embrace both these aspects of Christ. "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased," expresses the love of God as seen in what God wills man to be—clearly a love which contemplates the coming into existence of a new feeling in God towards man, as well as of a new feeling in man towards God, viz., a complacency and delight of the Father in His offspring, as well as the quickening of a filial heart in them: "My son, be wise, and make my heart glad." While the son is unwise, the Father's heart is not glad. In this view it is that I feel it necessary to qualify the expression "it is man that needs to be changed in his feeling toward God, not God that needs to be changed in His feeling towards man." "It is man that needs to be reconciled to God, not God that needs to be reconciled to man." Most true these words are as meaning "It is man that needs to have love to God quickened in him, not God that needs to have love to man quickened in Him;"* but they are untrue if understood as implying that there is no new feeling in God towards humanity as seen in Christ,

* An expression occurring in a letter of the Bishop's.

which is not in Him towards humanity, as seen in us in our rebellion and alienation from God.

Acceptance (though it is rather seeming acceptance) of what I have attempted to illustrate as the prospective aspect of the Atonement, combined with the rejection of what I say as to its retrospective aspect, is, more strictly speaking, a welcoming of the destructive portion of the book combined with a rejection of the constructive portion. My own freedom and comfort in rejecting what I reject has however been felt only in the light of what I substitute; and I say "rather *seeming* acceptance," because, in truth, a *real* acceptance of the prospective aspect of the Atonement can only be attained in that light in which its retrospective aspect commends itself also.

I am, my dear Bishop,
Ever yours truly,
(Signed) JOHN McL. CAMPBELL.

SINCE the greater part of the paper which precedes these letters was written (which was shortly after the Lambeth Conference), the judgment on the Voysey case has been delivered, in which the view of reconciliation occurring in the Lambeth Pastoral has been formally adopted. This renders the question of deeper and graver import for members and ministers of the Church of England; and nothing, in the opinion of the writer, has been of equal import to that Church since her deliverance from the toils of a false Catholicism. May the over-worship of the instrumentality wherewith she was delivered—the formulas of Protestantism—not become a second and similar risk of bondage.

What the precise duty is of those who feel that the glory of God and the grace of the Gospel are overshadowed by this view of reconciliation, it is hard to say. What is to be the final issue, or what is the precise value of the decision lately given, it would be unbecoming in the writer to suggest. Office-bearer as he is in another branch of the Anglican communion, he is not called upon, and it would be improper, to criticize and judge. But as concerned in the general aspects of the question, so far as having been a party to that formal statement of the Lambeth Conference in which the expression occurs, and in which the question of the meaning of "reconciliation" was first raised, he has thought it right to address a short explanation of the case as it now appears to him, and as now brought to bear upon the Church by the Voysey judgment, to the *Spectator* newspaper, in which the discussion was first raised; which explanation is here appended, as a sequel to and short summary of the matter (in the writer's opinion) as it now stands.

It is scarcely necessary to say that with the general sentiments of Mr. Voysey the writer has no sympathy. In all matters of sacredness, where even error is suspected, it is better to adopt the method of Shem and Japhet than that of Ham to his father Noah. Such matters as those treated of by Mr. Voysey have been too rashly dealt with in all ages of the Church. Nor can we free the Councils themselves from blame in this matter. If the result has been to us the creeds which we possess, such as those of Nice and that called of Athanasius, it remains a question whether the Church has been a gainer or loser by their adoption. It is not too much to say that the divisions and distinctions so mechanically introduced into the conception of

the Divine nature, especially in the creed of Athanasius, would have been more properly dealt with, had they been left as generally set forth in Holy Scripture, than rudely and irreverently insisted on as in that creed. Such things are like the rod of Moses; if taken by the proper end, a wand of power, a divining rod; if taken up improperly, a serpent. We are free to say that it had been taken in the latter way by the defendant in the late trial. But still, in the matters under judgment there was so much of the Divine light present, that if not enough to secure his acquittal, it seems a confusion of judgment to make it, in part, the cause of his condemnation; for surely the view of reconciliation put forth in the defence, and the upholding of the eternal safety of little children in the hands of God, even if unbaptised, cannot deserve condemnation.

May the consideration of the question be entered upon by all with a becoming sense of its deep importance, and of the duty incumbent upon us of ever following and contending for the higher light!

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "SPECTATOR."

SIR,—I should have requested you ere now to have allowed me to say a word on the subject of "Reconciliation," as affected by the Voysey trial, had not illness prevented me. I have felt a call on me to do this in connection with what took place on the same subject at the Lambeth Conference, to which reference was made in your own columns. The meaning there affixed to the word was the same as that given on the present occasion; but it was waived at that

time on the part of those who objected to it, on the score that the Lambeth Encyclical was to be received as an "Eirenicon," and not as a definition of faith. And of so little importance did the matter then seem, that when in the subsequent Convocation attention was drawn to the subject, the objection to the phrase used was overruled on the plea that it was "a *microscopic* criticism." But what was said at the Convocation was enough to show how grave an issue underlay the discussion. For the words of the celebrated and highly orthodox Dr. John Mason Neale were quoted, where he says, "Notice here and again presently the unscriptural phrase, 'reconcile God.' According to St. Paul's teaching, it is man that must be reconciled to God, not God to man. This appears to me a good argument in favour of the belief that St. Clement's Liturgy" (it is on this Liturgy he is commenting) "was never really employed by any Church. Such an error might easily escape the notice of an individual writer, but the marvellous accuracy of the early Liturgists would not have allowed the phrase to remain in use." The matter, however, has now assumed a different and more formidable aspect; for the phrase has been formally accepted by the Church, defined as her meaning of "reconciliation," and sanctioned as such by penalties.

It is probable that the infliction of penalty in the late case was induced by other reasons than the use of this word in the sense objected to, and would be considered undesirable and impossible for this use alone. But is the path of clergymen who hold the word in the sense condemned absolutely clear, although they may escape penalty? Is there no duty they owe to themselves and to the truth? Can they remain members of a Church which

intentionally obscures to them that which is of the essence, and which, if it be of the essence, contains the power, of the Gospel? To my own mind, at this moment, the conviction comes that as yet nothing can be done, that we are but at the opening of the question, and that it is yet scarce realized how grave the matter is. That the issue will be in behalf of the truth we cannot doubt; but it will not come by the breaking into or out of Churches.

The difference in the meaning of the word *Reconciliation*, as applied to the reconciliation of man or of God by the incarnation, is fundamental. In the first case, it is, as its origin *Revelation* implies, a key to the character of God; in the other, it is a mystery over and above the already present mysteries concerning Him.

It is probable that this will not be thought to be a correct description, for we are so much in the habit of mixing up the two conceptions of reconciliation that we scarcely realize the meaning of either when apart. Yet if we look at them apart, we shall see how very different they are. If we consider that the object of the incarnation was the reconciliation of man, we have admittance to a region of light by it; if of God, we have no guide to what the meaning is, and are left in darkness. We cannot, on the one hand, attribute the reconciliation to an offering on the part of Christ as man to God; we are lost, on the other hand, as to the meaning of what He did if we look on Him as one with God. The object, we read, of the incarnation was to give us "fellowship" with God, a fellowship which was to be—as only it could be—the result of knowledge; the incarnation was to be the means of giving us this, as in it the life of the Eternal was manifested to us,

that we might know God in Christ, and by knowing live. All this is lost or unnecessary if the object of the incarnation was the "reconciliation of God." If that was its object, nothing in the way of knowledge is needful for us, for it does not apply to us; and all such explanations as have been attempted, such as equivalents for transgression, manifestations of justice, &c., are unnecessary, for if they have any meaning or explanation, it is connected with the incarnation being for the reconciliation of man, and not for the reconciliation of God.

I do not forget that thousands have "found peace" by the conception that the sacrifice of Christ was for the reconciliation of God; for the recognition that the act, whatever it was, and its initiation, was with God, and one of love, will ever have the effect of reconciling man. But, although it has this effect, this is a very different kind of reconciliation from the other; for it must be one irrespective in any way of its being a means of drawing us near to God in the way of "fellowship" or "understanding." It can never give us the place of sons, but leaves us under the old law in bondage. And how much of the obscurity and perversions of Christianity for so many ages must we not attribute to this latter view—a darkness whereby the greater portions of Europe have had their conceptions of Christianity resolved into the meaning that the sacrifice of Christ was to consist in the sending up of perpetual *masses* to appease an angry God? *Ite missa est.* And again in those other portions, where the same conception, in the form of a definition, has transferred the character of God and his mode of government into regions unknown and obscure. The best of our missionary (Protestant) records abound in

such expressions as this, "When kindly treated in sickness, they (the negroes) often utter imploring words to Jesus; and we may hope that they find mercy through His blood, though so little able to appreciate His sacrifice." And again, as if God in Christ were not *always* offering an infinite proof and gauge of His good-will towards us, and a revelation of His eternal nature on the cross, we constantly hear said and sung, without a thought of this apparently, such words as these:—

> "Seven times He spake seven words of love,
> And all three hours His silence cried
> For mercy on the souls of men:
> Jesus our Lord is crucified.
>
> "Come let us stand beneath the cross,
> So may the blood from out His side
> Fall gently on us drop by drop:
> Jesus our Lord is crucified."

Or such prayers as these, "Lord have mercy upon us, Christ have mercy upon us," apparently without an idea that all the while an infinite and eternal pledge and proof of that mercy are welling above us from the cross? "Ah! wounded Head," gazing on us, and not understood by those who say they see.

The doctrines of "grace," as they are most truly called, are virtually excluded by this view of reconciliation, and that "forgiveness of sins," which was to Luther life from the dead, is lost in its fulness and freedom in a desire to provide for the safety of the character of God. It is the old contest between the Law and the Gospel in a more subtle form, one which kills out all love and grace by making provision for their safe exercise, so that it is but too often but the prodigals and Magdalenes who really understand and accept the pardon; which is, however, under the same

conditions, and ever only so accessible to all—*i.e.*, free grace. But I should not say so much, or should not have said anything in my position, had not the subject been previously coupled with my name in your columns, and did I not deem it the first duty of a bishop to confess the truth and to contend for it, as it appears to him. And this is not the time when any one who believes in Christ or in God can sit silent and see Christianity and religion relegated to the past as of the darkness of the night, while we believe that it is now on a higher platform than ever, and that Christ, if rightly understood, is the true light of men and heir of all the ages. Catholicism substituted for Christ has turned the thought of Southern Europe to infidelity, if not to Atheism; let us take heed that Protestantism does not the same thing, in another way, for the North. But our comfort is this, that, happen what may, "*He* must increase," for He is not only the light, but the moving power of all things. Yet Christ can only benefit by the light which He affords. And surely if there be a choice of interpretations, that is to be preferred in which most of the light is to be found.

I am, Sir, &c.,

ALEXANDER EWING,

Bishop of Argyll and the Isles.

PALERMO, SICILY, *25th March*, 1871.

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